

A  
COURSE  
OF THE  
BELLES LETTRES:  
OR, THE  
PRINCIPLES  
OF  
LITERATURE.

Translated from the FRENCH of the  
ABBOT BATTEUX,  
Professor of RHETORIC in the ROYAL COLLEGE  
of NAVARRE, at PARIS,

By Mr. MILLER.

In FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

Printed for B. LAW and Co. T. CASLON, J. COOTE,  
G. KEARSLEY, S. HOOPER, and A. MORLEY.

M.DCCLXI.



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# T A B L E

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ERRATA in this Volume.

- Page 5, l. 2, for *warn*, read *warm*  
51, l. 13, for *just*, read *joust*.  
108, in the note, l. 1, for *still*, read *hill*.  
194, the note to this page (containing Mr. Addison's criticism on Boileau's eighth satire) has, by accident, been misplaced; it properly falls at the bottom of page 192, immediately after the Latin note from Quintilian.

THE PRINCIPLES  
OF  
LITERATURE.

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SECTION III.  
OF LYRIC POETRY.

---

CHAP. I.

Lyric poetry is subject to the principle of imitation.

LYRIC poetry, considered only in a superficial manner, seems the least disposed of any of the kinds to submit to that general principle which reduces them all to imitation.

And here many of our readers will be ready to cry out, What are not the Psalms of David, the Songs of Solomon, and the Odes of Pindar and Horace, to be esteemed true poems? They are surely the most perfect ones we have! Trace them to their origin. Is not poetry a song produced by an emotion of joy, admiration, and gratitude? Is it not a cry of transport, springing immediately from the heart; a sudden ejaculation arising wholly from nature, without the least assistance of art? And yet we see no description or painting in it. All is pure sentiment and rapture. Therefore you will at least allow us these two points: That the lyric is true poetry; and that, nevertheless, this poetry has none of the characters of imitation. Here now we have the objection stated in its full force.

Before I give in my answer, I desire to ask those who make this objection, Whether the passions in music and the opera, which are wholly lyric, are real or imitated? Whether the chorus of the ancients, which preserved the original nature of poetry, and was the expression of pure sentiment, was nature itself, or only an imitation of it? Whether the translators of David's Psalms were as truly inspired as the royal poet himself? Lastly, whether the actor, who paints the passions in such a lively manner to us on the stage, does truly experience them without any help from art, and is actually in that situation he appears to us? If all this feigned, artificial, imitated,



imitated; then it must be allowed me that the matter of lyric poetry, for its being in the sentiments, is not the less subject to imitation.

Neither will what is objected, with regard to the origin of poetry, make any stronger against this principle. To look for poetry, in its first origin, is to look for it before its existence. The elements of arts were created at the same time with nature: but arts themselves, such as they are now known to, and defined by us, are very different from what they were at their first birth. For, to judge of poetry by her sister arts, their first beginnings were only an inarticulated sound, a rude sketch, or a propped roof; and how are we to trace them in such definitions?

But, allowing the sacred songs to be real poems without being imitations, will that make against those poets who owe their inspirations wholly to nature? Was it man that sang in Moses? Was it not rather the Spirit of God that dictated what he wrote? He is the great master, and, as creator, has no occasion for imitation. Whereas our poets, with all their boasted inspirations, owe all to the assistance of their own natural genius, or to an imagination heated by art, and an assumed enthusiasm. Suppose them touched with a real sentiment of joy, it will inspire them with only a couplet or two at most for their song; but, if they want to carry this further, it must be the work of art to join a set

of new sentiments to the piece, of the same kind with the former : and, though nature may light the fire, it is art that must feed and keep up the flame. Therefore the example of the prophets, who sang without being indebted to imitation, can furnish no argument against those poets who are professed imitators.

Besides, what makes the sacred poetry appear so beautiful to us, but that we find it express, in the most perfect manner, the very sentiments which we imagine we should have experienced ourselves, had we been in the situation of those holy writers? And, supposing those sentiments to be true only, without being probable, even then we ought to have a respectful admiration for them ; but they would not give us that pleasing impression they now do. So that a writer, who would please mankind, though he does not actually imitate, yet he should make his productions carry an air of imitation, and give to truth herself the features of probability.

Lyric poetry might be considered as a species of itself, without any prejudice to the principles to which the other kinds of poetry are reducible. But there is no occasion for such a distinction ; as it naturally, and even necessarily, enters into imitation, its object alone characterizing and distinguishing it from all the rest.

The other kinds of poetry have actions for their principal object. Lyric poetry is altogether consecrated to sentiment ; this is its subject and  
essential

essential object. Let it mount like a stream of fire, let it insinuate itself by degrees, and warn without noise; let it be an eagle, a butterfly, or a bee, it is always by the sentiment that it is controuled or borne away.

## CHAP. II.

The nature and rules of lyric poetry:

**L**YRIC poetry is in general intended to be sung to music, and from thence has its name of lyric; and because that formerly in compositions of this kind the voice was usually accompanied with an instrument called a lyre. The word ODE has the same derivation; *ode* signifying song, cantata, hymn.

From hence it follows, that lyric poetry and music must necessarily have an intimate connection with each other, founded in the things themselves, since they have each one and the same object to express. If so, music being an expression of the sentiments of the heart by the means of inarticulate sounds, musical or lyric poetry must be an expression of the sentiments of the heart by the means of articulate sounds, or, which is the same thing, by words. Nothing now remains but to explain this idea.

In man we find an understanding and a will; two faculties, of which the operations are knowledge and motion. These operations are as inseparable from each other as the faculties them-



selves which produce them are from the soul. When we think, our tastes are mingled with our thoughts; in our sensations, our thoughts are mingled with our tastes. Thus in speaking or writing, there is commonly in every thing we express, a light and heat; the first of these belongs to the understanding and thought; the latter to the will, sentiment, and taste. I say *commonly*, because there are some kinds in which light is found alone; as, for example, in geometry; and that there are others again where heat only is found, as in music. But here we are speaking only of such works, in verse or prose, whose object is to please and instruct at the same time, and which are called works of taste. In these there must necessarily be both light and heat, otherwise the reader would lose himself for want of the one, or grow tired and disgusted for want of the other.

But these two qualifications should be united in such degree only as is most suitable to the subject we would treat, and the end we proposed in the work. If we would paint truth to the mind, light should predominate; when the heart is to be touched or affected, then heat should take place.

History, dissertations, and arguments of every kind, require above all things to be light and clear. Oratory, the epic and the drama, may form an equal or unequal mixture of the two qualities, according to the style or character

of the different parts of the subject they treat of. But, in that species of poetry which is made to be sung, heat should always have the predominancy, and that in a greater or less degree, according to the subject. In a word, the nearer the kinds approach to geometry, the more of clearness, simplicity, and coolness, they should have; the nearer they approach to music, the more of heat, pathos, and energy. In such case, the heart will possess itself of the whole subject, and perspicuity will be almost absorbed and lost in sentiment.

We may then define the lyric that species of poetry which expresses the sentiment; to this add a form of versification proper for singing, and it will have all that is requisite to render it entirely perfect.

From this short theory arise all the several rules of lyric poetry, as well as the licences peculiar to it. This is what authorises the grandeur of its beginnings, of its transports and its transitions. From hence it draws that sublimity so peculiar to it, and that enthusiasm which renders it so nearly divine.

#### Of lyric enthusiasm.

Enthusiasm, or poetic fury, is thus called, because the soul, when filled with it, is entirely given up to the object which inspires it. It is no other than a sentiment of some kind; as love,

anger, joy, admiration, sorrow, &c. produced by an idea.

This sentiment is not properly denominated enthusiasm, when natural; that is to say, when produced in a person by the situation he is really in; but only when it is found in an artist, poet, painter, or musician, and is the effect of an imagination artfully heated by the objects which it figures to itself in composition.

Thus, the enthusiasm of artists is only a lively sentiment, produced by a lively idea with which the artist has himself affected his own mind.

According as the objects, represented by the ideas, are more or less grand, beautiful, good, interesting, trivial, deformed, or bad, they may produce sentiments differing in kind and degrees, and, consequently, different manners of enthusiasm. Every artist, who has a just right to that title, has one peculiar to himself, and that in each subject.

That which belongs to the lyric poet is sometimes sublime, sometimes soft and gentle, but most commonly it preserves a certain medium between the sublime and the soft. This happens indifferently either from the nature of the subject itself, or from the poet's own turn of sentiment: for, if the subject has its particular colour, the poet also has his; sometimes that of the poet spoils that of the subject, and at others the subject owes almost every thing to the poet.

## Of the sublime.

The sublime in general is whatever raises us above our former situation, and makes us at the same time sensible of this elevation.

We are not speaking here of what is called the sublime in style, which consists purely in a chain of noble ideas expressed in a noble manner. The sublime, of which we here speak, is a spark that enlightens or fires us.

There are two sorts of this sublime, viz. sublimity of images, and sublimity of sentiments.

Images are sublime when they raise the mind to a degree of dignity above all the ideas it is capable of forming to itself of greatness.

Sentiments are sublime when they appear in a manner superior to human nature; and, to use Seneca's expression, with the weakness of a man, shew the firmness of a God. Though the whole universe should fall on the head of the just man, his soul would remain tranquil and unmoved in the instant of the crush. Here the idea of this tranquil situation of the soul, contrasted to the tumult of a bursting world, forms a sublime image, and the tranquillity of the just man a sublime sentiment.

We should be careful to make a proper distinction between a sublimity of sentiment and a vivacity of sentiment. A sentiment may have a



## TO THE PRINCIPLES

great deal of vivacity without being sublime: anger, when carried to the height of fury, is the greatest degree of vivacity, but still it is not sublime. On the contrary, the sentiment, when sublime, is without vivacity, it does not consist so much in motion as in rest: a great soul is rather that which beholds such things as affect common souls, nay, even feels them too without emotion, than one that easily gives way to the impressions of external objects.--- And, indeed, it might in general be said, that a sublime sentiment is not lively, and that a lively sentiment is not sublime. When Regulus returns composedly to Carthage, where he knows that the most cruel tortures await him, the sentiment is sublime, but not lively. The poet (a) represents to himself the composure of Regulus in this dreadful situation: the spectacle strikes him, he is carried away by it, and composes a noble ode; his sentiment in this case is very lively, but it is not sublime.

This distinction supposed, we now proceed to the production of the lyric sublime. The poet is struck by a noble object; his imagination raises itself and becomes heated; it produces a train of lively sentiments, which, acting in their turn upon the imagination, greatly increase its fire. This gives birth to those mighty efforts to express the present situation of the soul. Hence

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(a) Horace, ode 5. book iii.

flow rich, nervous, bold expressions, striking extraordinary figures, and singular turns. It is in this situation, that the prophets see the mountains of the earth bow their heads beneath the foot-steps of the Lord of Hosts, the sea fly before him, and the high hills quake for fear of his presence. And Homer beholds the nod which Jupiter gives to Thetis, and the majestic motion of the head, by which he makes the heavens tremble (a).

Ἡ, καὶ κυανίῃσι ἐπ' ὀφρύσι νύσσι Κροσίῳ,  
 Ἀμβρόσιαι δ' ἄρα χαίται ἐπὶ ῥῶσαντο ἄνακτος  
 Κρατὸς ἀπ' αἰθανάτοιο· μέγαν δ' ἰλιλίξεν Ὀλύμπου.

- “ He spoke, and awful bends his sable brows :  
 “ Shakes his ambrosial curls, and gives the nod;  
 “ The stamp of fate, and sanction of a God :  
 “ High heav’n, with trembling, the dread signal took,  
 “ And all Olympus to the center shook.”

Pope.

This is the sublime which properly belongs to the ode, viz. sublimity of images, which produces a lively sentiment, and is reproduced and augmented by that sentiment in its turn.

Sublimity of sentiment has neither passions, transports, strong images, nor bold expressions; every thing in it is plain and easy. The soul, completely mistress of herself, beholds things as they really are, and is never at the pains of

making any change in them. A clear and self-collected reason directs all her motions; and the solidity of her motives affords her a support that nothing can shake. When she speaks, it is in a plain manner and without heat. Arria (a) stabs herself to set her husband an example of dying nobly; and, as she draws out the poniard, presents it to him with these words, *Pate, non dolet.*

When young Horatius is told, as he is going to fight with the Curiatii, that perhaps ere long his friends will have to deplore his loss; he answers:

(b) *Quoi! vous me pleureriez mourant pour mon pays?*

What! weep for him, who for his country dies?

And Cato, when desired by Cæsar's ambassador, to take some thought of his own safety, replies with a noble firmness:

The gods take care of Cato (c).

This kind of the sublime is not to be met with in the ode, because it generally belongs to some action, and the ode has nothing to do with action; it abounds chiefly in the drama. Shakespear and Corneille are every-where full of it.

From the ideas here advanced, we are enabled to make the following definitions:

(a) Martial i. 14,  
son's Cato.

(b) Corneille's Horaces.

(c) Addi-

A weak or mean soul is one that is easily elevated or depressed by a moderate attack of passion, whether anger, fear, joy, sorrow, &c.

The common soul is one that makes some small resistance to the more ordinary attacks of the passions, but cannot carry that resistance so far as to oppose any great increase of that attack.

The soul that is truly sublime has in itself a spring, which sets it not only above that weak soul which sinks beneath the least attack, but even above that virtue which is capable of resistance to a certain point and no farther. It is the so much celebrated allegorical rock of the poets, at whose feet the lashing waves break themselves in idle efforts.

There are degrees in this sphere of the sublime, of which a soul of a middling stamp can form no idea, even though it had the examples set before it.

The truth of what we have here advanced is sufficiently evinced by those strokes of the sublime already cited. We will add a few others, however, by way of setting them in their full light.

Queen Henrietta, consort to the unfortunate Charles I. of England, happening to be on ship-board in a violent storm, encouraged those about her, by telling them, with an air of the greatest tranquillity, *Queens are never drowned.*



Curiatius (*a*), as he is going to fight for his country, tells his mistress Camilla, who is making use of all her power to retain him,

*Avant que d'être à vous, je suis à mon pays.*

My country claims me ere I can be thine.

Augustus, having discovered the plot in which Cinna had been engaged against his life and empire, and, having convicted him by the fullest proofs, speaks to him thus :

*(b)* Soyons amis, Cinna, ce'st moi qui t'en convie.

Let us be friends, 'tis I invite thee to it.

These are sentiments truly sublime. The queen in the first example was above fear : Curiatius in the next was superior to the power of love ; and, in the last, Augustus triumphs over the desire of revenge. All three are above the common rank of passions and virtues. It is the same with the other instances of the sublime.

But the sentiment to be truly sublime should be founded on some real virtue, otherwise it is mere brutality or stupidity. It is no proof of a sublimity of soul that a man does not fear God. Catiline will never be esteemed an hero, though possessed of a certain fortitude of soul. For the same reason no thought can be truly sublime that is not founded on truth. And, when Lucan

---

*(a)* In the Horace of Corneille.

*(b)* In his Cinna.

puts all the gods in one scale, and Cato singly in the other to outweigh them all,

*Victrix causa Diis placuit, SED victa Catoni.*

It must make any one smile who can distinguish between tinsel and sterling. His thought is of that kind of sublime which borders upon puerility.

But to return to the lyric sublime. We have already said that it consists in the strikingness of the images, and in the vivacity of the sentiments. It is this latter quality which produces the boldness of the beginnings, the starts of fancy, &c. of which we shall come to speak, when we have given our readers an idea of the two kinds of enthusiasm, the gentle and the moderate.

The mild enthusiasm is that which the poet feels when engaged in pleasing and elegant subjects, such as produce only peaceful sentiments.

One may easily form an idea of that enthusiasm, which I call the moderate, and which holds the middle rank between the sublime and the gentle. It is what produces the sublime style, which consists in a chain of elevated thoughts, bold and rich expressions, harmonious sounds, close and nervous turns, and brilliant metaphors: the fancy is always full; always kept up. The sublime itself is all transport, rapture, fury, and grand strokes. The mild, all sport, laughter, delightful ease, and the happy indolence which leaves the soul no more action  
than

than just what is necessary to the exertion of sentiment. From the mixture of these two kinds results a graceful energy, which constitutes the third, or moderate kind of enthusiasm, of which we here speak.

#### Of the exordium of the ode.

The exordium of the ode should be always bold; for, when the poet snatches his lyre, he is supposed to be forcibly struck with the objects he represents to himself. His imagination catches fire; he sets off like an impetuous torrent, which overflows its banks; so that it is impossible that the ode should any-where mount higher than at its beginning: but then the poet on his side, if endowed with any taste, will take especial care to stop the instant he perceives himself to descend.

#### Of the breaks of the ode.

A break or start in writing is a kind of void space between two ideas, not immediately connected with each other. Every one is acquainted with the quickness of the mind. When the soul is heated by passion, this quickness becomes prodigiously increased; its impetuosity hurries thought upon thought, and is continually pushing them on. But, as it is impossible to express them all in order as they rise, the poet lays hold

on

on such alone as are the most striking; and, expressing them in the order in which they rose in his mind, without any regard to that which served to connect them with each other, they appear extravagant and disjointed. They hang but slightly together, and have certain void spaces between them, which are easily filled up by a reader of any tolerable genius, who enters into the spirit of the poet. For example: Moses, in his book of Job, makes God say, "I have spoken, where are they? I have spoken to my enemies in my wrath; and by my word alone were they scattered: ye, who beheld my triumph, say, Where are they?" The two thoughts of the holy writer are, "I have spoken, where are they?" All the other ideas which are found between these few words, existed primarily in the poet's mind, but, not thinking proper to express them, he left this space which is called a break.

Breaks take place only in such subjects as will admit of quick and lively passions; as they are the effect of an agitated mind, and nothing but important objects can cause such an agitation in the mind.

#### The lyric excursions.

Excursions or digressions are a kind of sallies, made by the mind of the poet, on such subjects



as have some relation to that on which he is engaged, whether tempted by the beauty of the matter, or obliged to it by the barrenness of his own subject, incapable of itself to supply him with sufficient decorations.

Excursions are of two kinds; the one, consisting of common places and general truths, which are often susceptible of the greatest poetic beauties; as in that ode of Horace, where he (*a*) takes occasion, from a voyage that his friend Virgil is to make by sea, to inveigh bitterly against the temerity and sacrilegiousness of mankind, which is to be restrained by no consideration, human or divine. The other kind consists in certain passages of history or fable, which the poet makes use of to prove some point in view. Of this nature is the story of Regulus (*b*), and that of Europa (*c*), in the above-named author. These digressions are more allowable in compositions of the lyric kind than in any other, for reasons already given.

#### The irregularity of the ode.

Poetic irregularity consists in representing things suddenly and without preparation, or inverting their natural order. This is the irregularity of the things. There is that of the words likewise,

---

(*a*) Book i. ode 3.  
ode 27.

(*b*) Book iii. ode 5.

(*c*) Book iii.

which form those turns, that, without being strained, appear extraordinary and irregular.

But, in general, the breaks, excursions, and irregularities of the ode, should be used only to vary, enliven, or enrich the subject. If they obscure, overload, or embarrass it, they are faulty. If reason does not guide the poet, she must at least attend him; for, without that, his enthusiasm will be at best but the ravings of madness, and his wanderings the impertinences of folly.

From the foregoing observations we may draw two inferences.

First, that an ode should not exceed a moderate length. For, if it is entirely in the sentimental taste, and in that kind of it which is produced by the sight of any object, it will not be possible for it to keep up its fire for any great length of time: *Animorum incendia*, says Cicero, *seleriter restringuntur*; "Nothing goes out more quickly than the fire of the mind." Accordingly we find that it is the practice with the best lyric poets to exhibit their object under as many different appearances as can produce and keep up the same impression, after which they quit it almost as abruptly as they took it up.

Secondly, that every ode should have unity of sentiment in like manner as every epic and dramatic poem has unity of action. It is allowable, nay, it is necessary, sometimes to vary the images, thoughts, and turns; but then it should be in such

such a manner as to preserve the analogy between these and the predominant passion. This passion may be employed in a self-survey, its workings more or less expanded, diversified, or presented in all its lights; but it must never depart from its own nature, or yield its place to another. If mirth or joy takes the lyre, she may indeed give a loose to her transports, run wild, and land where she may; but it must not be upon sorrow or distress; that would be an unpardonable fault. If hatred begins the song, love must never end it, unless it be the love of some object directly opposed to that of our hatred; for then it is still the same first sentiment only disguised. This likewise holds good with respect to the other sentiments.

### CHAP. III.

#### The different kinds of odes.

**T**HERE are four kinds of odes: 1. The sacred ode addressed to God, and known by the name of hymn or canticle. This is the highest kind of ode, and is the expression of the heart, which admires with transport the grandeur, omnipotence, wisdom, and infinite goodness of the Supreme Being, and in this manner pours forth its grateful extasy. Of this kind are the songs of Moses and the prophets, and the Psalms of David.

2. There

2. There is another sort which is called *heroic*, and is particularly consecrated to the glory of some great hero; such are in the first place those of Pindar, some of Horace's, of Malherbe, of Rousseau, of Cowley, Dryden, and Pope.

3. The third kind may be called the *philosophical* or *moral* ode, and is that wherein the poet, struck with the charms of virtue, or shocked at the deformity of vice, abandons himself to those transports of love or hatred to which these different objects give birth.

4. The fourth and last kind is born in the midst of pleasure, and is the instantaneous expression of a transport of joy, love, wit, humour, &c. such are the odes of Anacreon, and most kinds of songs, especially those of the French.

#### CHAP. IV.

##### The form of the ode.

THE form of the ode differs according to the taste of the people with whom it is in use. With the Greeks it was commonly divided into *stanzas*, which they called *forms*, *στίχες*. These *stanzas* had different names. There was the *strophe*, *antistrophe*, and *epode*. The *strophes* answered to the *antistrophes*, and the *epodes* to each other. They began with the *strophe*, then followed the *antistrophe*, and last of all the *epode*; after this they began again in the same manner.

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The singing of these verses was generally accompanied with dancing, in which the dancers turned to the left during the *strophe*, and to the right during the *antistrophe*. The epode they sang standing still (*a*). The songs they called ode, or antode; as the entrance and return were called *strophe* and *antistrophe*: at last, when they came to the epode, which was generally the shortest part, they performed it without turning either to the right or left, but standing directly before the altar. The odes of Pindar are in this form, and most of the ancient dramatic chorusses.

Alcæus, Sappho, and other lyric poets, had, before the time of Pindar, invented different forms for the ode, in which were intermixed verses of different kinds, the symmetry of which recurred much oftener: and this is the form followed by Horace in most of his odes.

The French (and English) have two sorts of odes: the one retaining the original name Ode; the other called Cantata, as being composed for music, which the former is not.

In the first of these, the arrangement and number of the verse depends chiefly upon the choice and disposition of the poet; but, when once the

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(*a*) The *strophe* was supposed to denote the motion of the higher sphere; the *antistrophe* that of the planets; the *epode* the fixed station of the earth. See West's preface to his Pindar.

first strophe is determined, it serves as a rule for all the rest.

In cantatas we distinguish two parts: the recitative and the air. The recitative begins the piece, and then follows the air; after that another recitative, and then another air. The recitative presents the object to the mind; the air expresses the sentiment properly arising from the view of that object. This produces two kinds of music, and two kinds of poetry. The music of the recitative is generally soft and simple, that of the air more brisk and animated.

These two different kinds of music and of poetry, in one and the same lyric piece, furnish us with occasion of examining a kind of problem, viz. Why, music being wholly of the sentimental kind, there is one sort of poetry of a melting sweetness, and another which requires on the contrary all the force and energy imaginable?

It is certain that, in general, the sweeter, softer, and more languishing the verse is, provided it be not too flimsy, the readier it will admit of being set to music. In this case, the inflexions and breaks in the air seem to be in a manner already half formed in the words themselves, and that a very little art is requisite to bring them forth. An example of this kind we have in the works of Quinault (*a*), who is per-

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(*a*) A French poet, famous for his operas, in the age of Lewis XIV. They are all set by the celebrated Baptist Lulli,

haps the most musical and truly lyric poet that ever wrote.

But, notwithstanding what has been here said, these odes which are composed for music, will admit, nay, absolutely require, deep-laid images and hardy metaphors. Pindar abounds with these. Horace has whole odes which are but one continued chain of allegories. The chorusses in Sophocles, Euripides, and Seneca, are remarkably strong, and full of fire and force; as are likewise the Psalms of David and the songs of the prophets. But whence arises this difference?

To reduce the whole to a narrow compass: Every composition intended for music should be full of sentiment; the productions of the sentiment are always easy, free, and natural. But we find that odes, and the sacred odes in particular, have all the marks of energy, care, and exactness, in their composition.

Now to explain this difficulty, nothing more is required than to examine things more closely, and recall to our minds what has been already advanced.

It has been granted that music properly expresses only the sentiment. It is likewise allowed, that the sentiment is always free and natural. But these qualities do not exclude force or energy in the expression; on the contrary, they add to it. The sentiment, when at the height of its vivacity, divests itself of the common modes of expression:

pression: it speaks rather by things than words, these latter proving often too feeble expletives. It does not say, *My disorder is cruel*; but *it is a merciless tyger*: and from hence arise metaphors, allegories, and simile's. Its natural ease excludes far-fetched thoughts, dry historical facts, witty conceits, epigrammatical points, over-nice transitions, and systematical expositions, which accordingly are never to be met with in any lyric production; but it does not prohibit the use of the strongest and most emphatical expressions, which may at all times enter into it, and, indeed, are oftener to be met with here than in any other kind of writing whatever. For, in lyric poetry, the imagination shews itself in all its force; and, as it beholds things in an enthusiastic light, it naturally inclines the soul to a warmth of expression.

But, then, how comes the poetry of Quinault to be so very soft and harmonious?

1. Because this poet sang only of mirth and joy, which are naturally founded on ease and indolence.

2. Because the greatest part of his works is in recitativo, as being tragedies. Now, in this case, the poetry, though confessedly of the lyric kind, is not intirely consecrated to passion. The soul is so occupied with the continual succession of ideas, that she is obliged to drop the sentiment, and exert all her attention; and then farewell to raptures, enthusiasm, and all those expressions



that denote poetic inebriation and fury. In short, here the sentiments follow the ideas; whereas, in the air, the ideas follow the sentiments. There is a master-sentiment, which intirely fills the soul, and disposes of all its faculties after its own manner; and as, in this case, the soul has not time for reasoning or reflection, it is less regardful of the justness and propriety of the words it makes use of, than of their force and energy: for, having only a sudden impulse to express, it is allowed, nay, even required, that every thing should be admitted that is capable of supplying force and energy.

## CHAP. V.

### The origin of lyric poetry.

THE first exclamation of MAN, when rising from non-entity into being, was a lyric expression. When he opened his eyes on the universe, and felt his own existence, by the agreeable impressions he received from all his senses, he could not refrain from lifting up his voice; and the cry he uttered was a complicated cry of joy, admiration, astonishment, and gratitude, arising from a croud of ideas equally surprising in themselves, as well as by their novelty: when more at leisure, and recovered from his confusion, he became fully sensible of the many blessings he enjoyed, and of the wonders he

he beheld around him, he was desirous that the whole universe should assist him in paying the tribute of praise and glory which he owed his divine benefactor. He animated the sun, planets, rivers, mountains, the winds, and all nature, in his song, and made every created being speak to join their homage to that of man. Such was the origin of sacred songs, hymns, odes, and in fine, of lyric poetry.

Mankind being now increased, God made his power known in behalf of the righteous against the wicked. His people, in the warmth of gratitude, endeavoured to immortalize the benefits they had received at his hands by songs, which a religious tradition handed down to posterity. From hence came the songs of Moses, Deborah, and Judith, and the songs of the prophets.

David, full of the Spirit of God, and in the sublimity of his views, takes in not only the wonders of nature, but even the prodigies of divine grace. Sometimes he represents to himself the hand of the Creator drawing forth the universe from the treasures of his omnipotence, and ruling, ordering, and disposing all things therein, with infinite power and wisdom; at others, the ineffable goodness of the same divine being, cloathing itself with mortal flesh, to restore man to his first state, and bring him back to the end for which he was created; and every-where gives an example of an elevation of style, proportioned

to the subjects he treats of, and the spirit with which he is inspired.

The Pagans, though mistaken as to the object of their adoration, acknowledged the same principle, by the end and intent of their ceremonies, as did the worshippers of the true God. It was joy and gratitude that determined them to institute and set apart certain solemn days for celebrating the praises of those gods to whom they imagined themselves indebted for the fruits of the earth: this gave rise to those hymns of joy sacred to the god of the vintage. These festivals fell out in autumn, a time when all the labors of the fields and harvest being over, every one was resigned to mirth and pleasure; on this account, they were celebrated with much greater pomp than those of the other deities, inasmuch as the pleasure of the adorers was blended with the glory of the god they adored.

After celebrating the god of wine, they soon proceeded to sing the god of love likewise; these two deities being too intimately connected to remain long separated in hearts now grown corrupted.

And, as the gods who were benefactors to mankind, were the natural objects of lyric poetry, heroes, the supposed children of those gods, would naturally claim a part in that kind of tribute. Not to mention that their own virtue, their courage, or the services they had rendered either a particular people, or mankind in general, gave

gave them a strong resemblance of the deity himself. This gave birth to the poems of Orpheus (a), Linus (b), Alcæus (c), Pindar, and some others, whose characters we shall now describe.

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(a) Orpheus was by birth a Thracian, and the son of Oeegrus, king of that country; or, as fable has it, of Apollo, and Calliope the chief of the nine muses. He was a most excellent poet, and deeply read in the learning of his times. He was one in the Argonautic expedition, of which he wrote the history, which, together with his hymns, &c. is still extant; but whether genuine is much doubted. They are certainly of great antiquity, but seem to be the works of different persons, and to have been written at different times. So great was his wisdom, and so persuasive his eloquence, that he reduced the barbarous people of his country to civility, which gave rise to the fable of the woods and hills following him to hear his music. See Horace, A. Poet. 391. And Palephatus, a very ancient author, assures us in particular, that this fable was invented on his softening the minds of the Bacchanalian nymphs, and making them quit the mountains whither they fled, and where they spent several days in tearing sheep to pieces. Cicero however tells us, from Aristotle, that there never was such a man as Orpheus; and that the *Orphicum carmen* was made by a Pythagorean, named Circops. Vide Nat. Deor. i. 38.

(b) Linus was a native of Thebes, and said to be the son of Apollo and the muse Terpsichore. He taught music and letters, and was master to Orpheus and Hercules. See Virg. Ecl. iv. 56. and vi. 57.

(c) Alcæus. He was born at Mitylene, a city of Lesbos: it is from him that the Alcaic verse took its name. He was a declared enemy to the tyrants of Lesbos, and in particular to Pittacus, whom he perpetually lashed in his poems. Quintilian says, that the style of Alcæus is close, lofty, correct, and, what crowns his praise, that he very much resembles Homer: *In eloquendo brevis, & magnificus, & diligens, plerumque Homero similis.* L. X. c. 1.



## CHAP. VI.

Characters of the principal lyric poets among the  
ancients.

## P I N D A R.

THE name of Pindar is at present less that of a poet than of enthusiasm itself, and carries with it an idea of the highest degree of lyric transport, flights, transitions, and digressions: notwithstanding which, this poet wanders from himself less frequently than is commonly imagined. The praises of the heroes he celebrates, are not to be taken as belonging only to the hero as conqueror, but as belonging originally and of right to his family, and still more to the place of which he was a citizen. The expression was, Such a city has carried all the prizes at the Olympic games. So that, when Pindar recites the former exploits either of the ancestors of the conqueror, or of the city to which he belonged, it is to be considered not so much a wandering excursion of the poet, as an effect of his art (*a*).

Horace (*b*) speaks of Pindar with an enthusiastic admiration, which plainly shews how sub-

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(*a*) See Mr. West, in his preface to his Translation of Pindar, in which work the reader will meet with a compleat history of the Olympic games.

(*b*) Hor. ode iv. 2.

None a poet he thought him. Julius Antonius, having commended him as equal to Pindar, gave occasion to that Roman lyric, by enumerating the several compositions of the Grecian, modestly to declare he durst not aspire to the sublimity and majesty of his style. He compares him to a torrent, that swelled by rains, thunders impetuously down a precipice. He not only claims the laurel by his dithyrambic pieces, and songs of victory; but when he laments the youthful bridegroom torn from his wishing bride, or describes the innocence of the golden age, and snatches from oblivion names which have merited immortality. Unfortunately for us, nothing of this admirable poet's is preserved but his hymns in honour of the Olympic victors, which are by far the least part of his works; the rest, whose subjects were the richest and most interesting to mankind in general, have not reached posterity.

His poetry appears dark and difficult to us on several accounts: first, from the extreme grandeur of the ideas; secondly, from the boldness of the turns; and, lastly, from his making use of new words, which he frequently coins purposely for such or such particular places. Add to this, that he abounds in an abstruse learning, references to secret history, and allusions to persons, things, and places, altogether unknown in that part of ancient history which has reached our times.

Monf. Perrault has taken it into his head to ridicule the first ftrophe of his first Olympic ode, of which the following is almost a literal translation :

“ Water is the most excellent of all elements,  
 “ Gold fhines amidst the treasures of kings, like  
 “ a flame in the midft of darkness. Mufe, if  
 “ thou wilt fing of victories, look not for a  
 “ brighter planet than the fun, which fhines  
 “ alone in the immense fpace of the air ; nor for  
 “ combats more glorious than thofe of Olym-  
 “ pia (a), which give birth to the noble ftrains  
 “ fang by the brighteft geniuffes in honour of the  
 “ fon of Saturn, as they enter the palace of the  
 “ king of Syracuse (b).”

We muft not dwell too nicely upon the turn or figures of the thoughts and words in this paffage. To go about to reproach Pindar for any thing, in point of ftyle, that the Greeks themfelves did not find reprehenfible, would be proving ourfelves very weak and infufficient judges. We have only a right to pafs verdict on the matter and things, and even then with great caution and referve.

(a) Olympia was a city of Peloponefus, near which were celebrated every four years the Olympic games. Thefe were instituted by Hercules in honour of Jupiter. They ferved the Greeks as an epocha for hiftory, as the confulates did afterwards to the Roman republic.

(b) This was Hiero, the fame who conquered the Carthaginians near Himera. He died in the 78th Olympiad.

Can any thing be more grand and noble, more truly lyrical, than this passage? Who would think Mons. Perrault could have translated the first verse in the manner he has done? 'Water indeed is very good;' *L'eau est bonne à la vérité.* This translation makes the sentence flat, and absolutely void of sense; whereas, in the Greek poet, it contains the basis of a system of philosophy set up by Thales, which held water as the primary principle and first element, out of which every being in nature was originally formed. Connect this thought with the following ones: 'The first of all elements; the most precious of all metals; the brightest of all planets.' These are symbols of the victory the poet means to celebrate. Gold shines amidst other metals like a light in the midst of darkness: the sun alone eclipses the light of every other planet, and turns the heavens to a desert, when he withdraws his presence; we can see nothing but him. Thus does an Olympic victory surpass all other victories. It is for the noblest geniusses alone to sing hymns of praise and thanksgiving, and, in this manner, to enter the palace of the prince who is conqueror.

It requires no great effort of imagination, nor a very strong prejudice in favour of the Greeks, to perceive the grandeur, loftiness, and richness of these thoughts; and therefore we ought to suppose them to have been executed equal to



their merit, and in a manner agreeable to the taste of the nation for whom the poet wrote.

But how does he praise this prince he mentions?

“ A prince who wields the sceptre of justice in  
 “ his kingdom ; who gathers the flower of every  
 “ virtue ; one equally skilled in the arts with the  
 “ dearest favourite of the muses. Take thy  
 “ lyre, learned muse ; give thyself up to the  
 “ pleasing transports wherewith thou art inspired  
 “ by the generous courser, who, flying along  
 “ the banks of Alphæus without requiring the  
 “ spur, carried his master into the bosom of vic-  
 “ tory. His glory blazes through all the regions  
 “ of Pelops, &c. (a)

We may here remark with what art the poet proposes his subject. We see Hiero, his steeds, his victory, all in a blaze of glory. The hero's sceptre is the same with that of Themis (b) herself. The virtues are represented as a plant bearing a beautiful flower, and this flower is gathered by Hiero : his courser flies along the banks of Alphæus (c) ; and lo ! he is in the bosom of victory.

The translator flatters himself, that, by inserting in this place a specimen of Mr. West's translation of Pindar in the ode before us, he shall at

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(a) Peloponnesus, now the Morea. (b) Goddess of justice.  
 (c) Alphæus, the name of a river which runs through Peloponnesus,  
 near the place where the games were celebrated.

once have an opportunity of obliging his readers, and shewing how far it is possible for the poetical talents of one of our own countrymen to equal the spirit of Pindar. This we may at least venture to say, that as this admired *Ancient* never before appeared to, so great advantage in an *English* dress, so perhaps he never may appear with a greater. The whole of Mr. West's book is indeed a treasure, for which the republic of letters will be no less indebted to him, than Christianity already is for his excellent *Observations on the history and evidence of the resurrection.*

From the First OLYMPIC ODE.

STROPHE I.

Chief of nature's works divine,  
Water claims the highest praise;  
Richest offspring of the mine,  
Gold, like fire, whose flashing rays  
From afar conspicuous gleam  
Thro' the night's involving cloud,  
First in lustre and esteem,  
Decks the treasures of the proud:  
So among the lists of fame,  
*Pisa's* honour'd games excel;  
Then to *Pisa's* glorious name  
Tune, O muse, thy sounding shell.

ANTISTROPHE I.

Who, along the desert air,  
Seeks the faded starry train,  
When the sun's meridian car  
Round illumines th' ethereal plain?

Who

Who a nobler theme can chuse,

Than *Olympia's* sacred games;

What more apt to fire the muse,

When her various songs she frames?

Songs in strains of wisdom dress'd,

Great *Saturnius* to record;

And, by each rejoicing guest,

Sung at *Hiero's* feastful board.

### E P O D E I.

In pastoral *Sicilia's* fruitful soil,

The righteous sceptre of imperial power

Great *Hiero* wielding, with illustrious toil,

Plucks every blooming virtue's fairest flower,

His royal splendör to adorn:

Nor doth his skilful hand refuse

Acquaintance with the tuneful muse, [borne.

When (a) round the mirthful board the harp is

Pindar was born at Thebes in Boeotia in the 65th Olympiad, 500 years before Christ. Alexander the Great, when he ruined that city, long after the death of our poet, as a mark of the esteem in which he held his memory, ordered the house in which he had lived to be preserved with great care.

Greece had her lyric poets long before the time of Pindar; the names of some of them are

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(a) This it seems was a custom among the ancients: at their entertainments a harp was carried round the table, and presented to every guest, which if any one refused, out of ignorance or unskilfulness, he was looked upon as illiterate or ill-bred.

yet famous, though their works are most of them lost: the chief were, Alcman (*a*), famous at Lacedæmon; Stesichorus (*b*), in Sicily; Sappho, who (as a poet) was the glory of her sex, and gave her name to the Sapphic verse which she invented (*c*). She was of the same place (the isle

(*a*) Alcman was a native of Sardis in Lydia. The Lacedæmonians adopted him on account of his merit, and granted him the freedom of their city, upon which he congratulates himself in his poems as a singular honour. He flourished in the time of Ardys, son of Gyges, king of Lydia, A. M. 3324. See Plut. de Exil. p. 599.

(*b*) Stesichorus was of Himera, a city of Sicily. He flourished about seventy years after Alcman. Pausanias relates, that this poet, having lost his sight as a punishment for verses which he had made in dispraise of Helen, did not recover it till he had recanted his invectives by a new piece, the reverse of the former. Pausan. in Lacon. p. 220. Quintilian tells us, that he sung of great wars, and the most illustrious heroes; and that he sustained the pomp and sublimity of epic poetry on the lyre: *Stesichorum, quam sit ingenio validus, materiae quoque ostendunt, maxima bella & clarissimas canentem duces, & epici carminis onera lyrâ sustinentem*, lib. x. cap. x. Horace gives him the same character in a single epithet; *Stesichoriquæ graves canentæ*, Stesichorus's lofty muse.

(*c*) Sappho composed a considerable number of poems, of which only two are come down to us; but these suffice to prove, that the praises given her by all ages, for the beauty, passions, numbers, harmony, and infinite delicacies of her verse, are not without foundation: hence she was called the *fourth muse*. It were to be wished, that the purity of her manners had equalled the beauty of her genius, and that she had not dishonoured her sex and poetry by her vices and licentiousness. Those desirous of a farther character of this poetess, will find it in the 223d and 229th numbers of the Spectator, with a translation of the two remaining fragments of her's.



of Lesbos) and flourished at the same time with Alcaeus (*d*).

### ANACREON.

This poet was of Teos, a city of Ionia, which was the reason of his using that dialect in his works. He was famous many ages before any of the aforementioned writers. He was contemporary with Cyrus, and died in the 6th Olympiad, in the 83d year of his age. We have many of his poems remaining. They are in general short, and breathe nothing but joy and pleasure. They consist chiefly in pleasing sentiments, tender thoughts, delicate turned compliments, by way of allegory. The graces of his style are simple, native, and half undressed.

His Dove is his master-piece of delicacy. Mr. Le Fevre used to say, that it seemed more the production of the muses or graces themselves, than of a mortal.

### THE DOVE.

Say, love's envoy, prithee do,  
Whither dost this journey go?  
Whence in all this haste dost fly,  
Thy wings perfuming all the sky?  
Tell me, gentle courier, do;  
Tell me, for I long to know.  
To his lov'd *Bathyllus* I  
Bear *Anacreon's* embassy:

Once I was fair Venus' slave,  
 Nor bore aught but what she gave;  
 But she sold me, for a song,  
 To her fav'rite *Anacreon*,  
 Whom now I serve, you see, and bear  
 These his letters thro' the air,  
 Which soft as my own feathers are;  
 For which kindly office he  
 Proffers me my liberty:  
 But all the freedom that I crave,  
 Is that I still may be his slave.  
 Wherefore should I, tell me why,  
 Wander thro' the desert sky?  
 Or make the mountains' top my seat,  
 And the coarse wild berries eat?  
 When with pleasure I may stand,  
 And peck out of *Anacreon's* hand  
 Delicious morsels, such as be  
 The sweet effects of luxury;  
 And sip such wine as he himself  
 Drinks to sweet *Bathyllus'* health:  
 Then, when I have drank my fill,  
 Round in wanton curvets reel;  
 Or, if soft sleep invades me, I  
 On his lyre reposing lie.  
 This, enquirer, is the brief  
 History of my voluptuous life:  
 But farewell; you've made me stay,  
 Chatt'ring like the idle jay.

Earl of WINCHELSEA's Translation.

It was a custom in former ages (and is to this  
 day in many parts of the east) to make use of  
 pigeons

pigeons to carry letters from place to place. The pigeon, who speaks in this little piece, is supposed to be one of these winged couriers. How simple, how artless his language! how full of grace and delicacy his speech! What a pleasing image does it give us of its own happy life, and that of its master, and of the delightful liberty that reigns in his house! But these beauties baffle all attempts towards a description; one must be born with a particular cast of soul to taste them in their perfection.

Some of his odes are purely descriptions of some rural scene, a pleasant retreat, or of a grassy couch inviting to soft repose, *ex. gr.*

“Come, dear Bathyllus, and seat thyself be-  
 “neath the shade of these charming trees. See  
 “how the wanton zephyrs gently agitate their  
 “leaves. Behold yon limpid fountain, which,  
 “as it flows, seems to invite us to taste its  
 “cooling stream. Ah! who can see such a  
 “delightful spot, and not long to repose them-  
 “selves on it?”

In another he gives us a little allegorical story:

The CAPTIVE, or LOVE made pri-  
 soner by the MUSE.

The muses lately Cupid found,  
 And in flow'ry fetters bound;  
 Then they their little captive gave  
 Up to beauty for her slave:

Venus,

Venus, with gifts and pray'rs, ne'er ceas'd  
 To get her *captive* son releas'd.  
 But should the largest giving hand  
 Again his liberty demand,  
 The ransom'd god would there remain,  
 There court, and bless his happy chain,  
 And rather beauty serve than be  
 Without her miserably free.

Earl of WINCHELSEA's Translation.

Nothing can be imagined more ingenious,  
 and, at the same time, more delicate, than this  
 fable. We are doubtless to suppose, that Cupid  
 had been lying in ambush for the muses; the  
 little enemy is taken, bound, and thrown into  
 prison; Beauty is appointed to watch over him:  
 he is offered his liberty, but will not accept it,  
 rather chusing to remain a prisoner where he is.  
 Every one must perceive the delicate and fine  
 turned truths concealed under this imagery. No-  
 thing can be more gallant (a).

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(a) For a general character of Anacreon, Cupid, who was the  
 chief hero of his verses, has given the best account of their worth,  
 as Mr. Cowley has taught him to speak in his elegy upon Anacreon  
 choked by a grape-stone:

All thy verse is softer far  
 Than the downy feathers are  
 Of my wings and of my arrows,  
 Of my mother's doves or sparrows;  
 Graceful, cleanly, smooth, and round,  
 All with Venus' girdle bound.

This is indeed the spirit of Anacreon himself transfused through  
 every line.

HORACE.



## H O R A C E.

Horace (*Quintus Horatius Flaccus*) was of Venusium, and, as he says himself, the son of a freedman. He was born in the 688th year of Rome.

This poet was the first, and only one of the Latins, who carried ode-writing to perfection, having made himself master of whatever was excellent of that kind in the Grecian lyrics, every one of which he appears to have read. He has, according to the respective subjects, the gravity and dignity of Alcæus and Stesichorus, the sublimity and heat of Pindar, the fire and vivacity of Sappho, and the softness and sweetness of Anacreon. But one may sometimes discover in him the footsteps of art, and that he is endeavouring to come up to these models. Anacreon is rather softer; Pindar more bold; Sappho, in the two fragments we have left, shews rather more fire; and probably Alcæus, with his golden lyre, was still more grand and majestic. And, indeed, it seems as if the Greeks had a kind of right of eldership in most branches of literature and taste: they seem to be most at home when seated on the summit of Parnassus. Virgil, with all his riches and abundance, is not so easy as Homer; Terence, to all appearance, is not the poet that Menander was. In short, if I might be allowed the expression, I would say, that the

Greeks.

Greeks appear born to riches, and the others, on the contrary, as people who have made their fortune by their own industry.

One may apply to the lyrics of Horace what he himself says of destiny in one of his odes: "That, at one time, it glides calmly in the middle of its channel; but, when its peaceful waters are enraged and swelled by increasing torrents, it bears down all before it, sweeping away whole rocks that it has undermined, and trees that it has forced up by the roots, with cattle, houses, and whatever opposes its passage, making the mountains and neighbouring woods echo with the mighty sound (a)."

What can be more soft and tender than his ode on the death of Quintilius Varus (b)?

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(a) . . . . . nunc medio alseo  
 Cum pace delabentis Etruscum  
 In mare, nunc lapides adesos  
 Stirpesque raptas, & pecus, & domos,  
 Volventis unâ; non sine montium  
 Clamore, vicinæque sylvæ  
 Cum fera diluvies quietos  
 Irritat amnes. Lib. iii. ode 29.

(b) This is not Quintilius Varus, who commanded the army in Germany under Augustus as his general, who, after his army was routed, killed himself; for that was twenty-seven years after Virgil's death, and eighteen after Horace died: but Quintilius Varus, the poet and critic of Cremona, an intimate friend of Virgil's, who died about the 10th consulship of Augustus.

Julius

Julius Scaliger was so delighted with it, that he declared he had rather have been the author of it, than king of Arragon.

The master-thought or sentiment in it is *sympathetic friendship*. Virgil had lost an excellent friend. To comfort him under his affliction, Horace begins by bewailing his loss with him, and then proceeds to insinuate to him, that he should think of putting some end to his grief. Some very curious reflections naturally occur on this dexterous turn of the poet in his office of comforter.

The whole of the piece is sacred to grief; but it is that kind of grief which is intended to draw tears, and is therefore to be in a languid, mournful, and desponding strain. Every thing must have the air of sorrow and negligence. The ideas will naturally range themselves, as they rise.

“(a) What shame or bound can there be to our  
 “affection for so dear a person? O Melpomene,  
 “to whom your father has given a melting voice,  
 “and the harp, teach me the mournful strains.  
 “Does then a perpetual sleep oppress Quintilius?  
 “To whom when will modesty, and uncorrupt  
 “faith

---

(a) Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus  
 Tam cari capitis? præcipe lugubres  
 Cantus, Melpomene, cui liquidam pater  
 Vocem cum cithara dedit.  
 Ergo Quintilium perpetuus sopor  
 Urget? cui Pudor, & justitiæ soror

Incorrupta

“faith the sister of justice, and undisguised truth,  
 “find any equal? He died lamented by many  
 “good men, but more lamented by none, than  
 “you, O Virgil. You, though pious, alas! in  
 “vain demand Quintilius back from the gods,  
 “who did not lend him us on such terms. What,  
 “though you could strike the lyre, listened to by  
 “the trees, with more sweetness than the Thra-  
 “cian Orpheus, yet the blood can never return  
 “to the empty shade, which Mercury, inexorable  
 “to reverse the fates, has, with his dreadful ca-  
 “duceus, once driven to the gloomy throng.  
 “This is hard: but every thing becomes more  
 “supportable by patience, which it is out of our  
 “power to amend.”

Incorrupta Fides, nudaque Veritas,

Quando ullum invenient parem?

Multis ille bonis flebilis occidit;

Nulli flebilior \*, quam tibi, Virgili.

Tu frustra pius, heu! non ita creditum

Poscis Quintilium Deos.

Quod si Threicio blandius Orpheo

Auditam moderere arboribus fidem;

Non vanæ redeat sanguis imagini,

Quam virga semel horrida

Non lenis precibus fata recludere,

Nigro compulerit Mercurius gregi.

Durum: sed levius fit patientia,

Quidquid corrigere est nefas.

Lib. i. ode 24.

\* *Flebilis*.] He is lamented. I have given this word the same sense here as it has in the 2d ode of the ivth book, *Flebili sponse juvenem raptum*: the youthful bridegroom snatched from his weeping bride; not from the bride who deserves to be lamented. Besides, this appears to be the most natural sense of the word in this place, and the best adapted to the mournful occasion.

The



The whole of this ode may be reduced to these few words: *Without doubt you have great reason to lament the loss of so sincere and perfect a friend as Quintilius was, but after all, you cannot recall him to life by your tears.* We will now consider it in its several parts.

*No shame or bounds . . .* It was precisely the reverse of this that Horace intended to hint to his friend, *specie excusantis exprobrat*. "Every man of understanding will set bounds to his grief;" *flagrantior equo non debet dolor esse viro*, was a truth that our poet wanted indirectly to make Virgil sensible of; but he begins by joining his own tears with his:

*Muse, inspire me with mournful sounds.* The muse grants his request, and immediately he sees the tomb of Quintilius before his eyes: he laments, he regrets the virtues of the deceased in a few words; real grief is sparing of its speech. At length he comes round gently towards his friend, and shews him, that it was the will of the gods, *non ita creditum*, "they would not have it so; they would not permit him to live for ever. The Latin phrase wraps up the idea. His grief is so tender, that even the softest expressions stand in need of being yet more softened, for fear of exasperating it. And it is a great mistake in those translators who have gone about to explain it by a periphrasis; it is intended just to be perceived, and no more.

And now the condoler takes occasion to relate an instance of a like misfortune with that of his friend's. This is an artful way of drawing him off from his own. Virgil no longer perceives his own unhappiness, or, if he does, it is in the person of another, of Orpheus. By these methods he is made to become a little pacified, and grows by degrees familiar with his affliction, till at length he is brought to acknowledge a truth which was at first only hinted at in general terms, lest the too sudden application of it to himself, and his present situation, should have had too sensible an effect.

One thing to be observed in this ode is, that the chain and connection between the several parts is kept up by the things only, and not at all by the words: a method which is fully sufficient on this occasion.

But what a different tone he takes when he makes Nereus, full of the god, behold the numberless squadrons that advance to subvert the ancient kingdom of Priam (a)?

“How are the warriors and their foaming  
 “ steeds covered with dust and sweat! What  
 “ deaths are dealt round among the sons of Dar-  
 “ danus! And lo! immortal Pallas prepares her  
 “ dazzling helmet, binds on the dreadful ægis, and,  
 “ inspired with fury, vaults into her rattling car.”

---

(a) Eheu quantus equis, quantus adest viris

Sudor! quanta moves funera Dardaniæ

Genti! Jam galeam Pallas, & ægida,

Curruſque & rabiem parat.

Lib. i. ode 15.

Or when he inveighs against the audaciousness and impiety of those who first attempted a passage by sea (a).

“ The presumptuous son of Iapetus \*, by an  
 “ impious † fraud, brought down fire into the  
 “ world : after fire was thus stolen from the ce-  
 “ lestial mansions, consumption, and a new train  
 “ of fevers settled upon the earth ; and the slow  
 “ approaching necessity of death, which till now  
 “ was remote, accelerated its pace. Dædalus  
 “ essayed the empty air with wings not designed  
 “ for men : the labour of Hercules broke through  
 “ Acheron. There is nothing too arduous for  
 “ mortals to attempt. We aim at heaven itself  
 “ through folly ‡ ; neither do we suffer, by our  
 “ wickedness, Jupiter to lay aside his revengeful  
 “ thunderbolts.”

---

(a) Andax Iapeti genus

Ignem fraude mala gentibus intulit.

Post ignem æthereâ domo

Subductum, macies, & nova febrium

Terris incubuit cohors :

Semotique prius tarda necessitas

Lethi corripuit gradum.

Expertus vacuum Dædalus æra

Pennis non homini datis.

Perrupit Acheronta Hercules labor.

Nil mortalibus arduum est.

Cælum ipsum petimus stultitia : neque

Per nostrum patimur scelus

Iracunda Jovem ponere fulmina. Lib. i. ode 3.

\* Prometheus.  
 to the fable of the giants.

† Or unhappy.

‡ Alluding

Or

Or gives lessons of moderation to the ambitious (a).

“O Delli! since you were born to die, be mindful to preserve an even temper of mind in times of difficulty, as well as secured from insolent exultation in prosperity: whether you shall lead a life of continual sadness, or you shall through happy days regale yourself with Ealernian wine of the richest date, at ease reclined in some grassy retreat, where the lofty pine and hoary poplar delight to interweave their boughs into an hospitable shade, and the clear rivulet with trembling surface purls along in a meandering current. Hither order your slaves to bring the wine, and the perfumes, and the grateful flowers of the too transitory rose, while

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D

“for-

(a) *Æquam memento rebus in arduis  
Servare mentem, non secus ac bonis,  
Ab insolenti temperatam  
Lætitia, moriture Delli:*

*Seu mæstus omni tempore vixeris;*

*Seu te in remoto gramine per dies*

*Festos reclinatum bearis*

*Interiore nota Falerni.*

*Quâ pinus ingens, albaque populus,*

*Umbram hospitalem consociare amant*

*Ramis, & obliquo laborat*

*Lympha fœdæ trepidare rivo,*

*Huc vina, & unguenta, & ænium breves*

*Flores amantæ ferre jube rose;*

\* *Nota interior.* The bottles had each of them a kind of ticket or label, with the date and name of the wine on it. *Interior* the innermost, the farthest rank in the cellar where the old wine was kept.



"fortune, age, and the sable threads of the  
 "three fatal sisters permit you. You must de-  
 "part from your numerous purchased groves;  
 "from your stately house, and from that delight-  
 "ful villa, which the yellow (sandy) Tiber  
 "washes, you must depart; and an heir shall  
 "possess these high-piled riches. It is of no  
 "consequence whether you are the wealthy de-  
 "scendant of the ancient Inachus, or whether poor  
 "and of ignoble race you live without a shelter  
 "from the open air, since you are the victim of  
 "merciless Pluto. We are all compelled to take  
 "the same road: the lot is shaking in the uni-  
 "versal urn; sooner or later it must come forth,  
 "and embark us in Charon's boat to eternal  
 "exile."

Dum res, & ætas, & sororum  
 Fila trium patiatur atra.  
 Cedet coemptis saltibus, & domo,  
 Villaque, flavas quam Tiberis lavit:  
 Cedet; & extructis in altum  
 Divitiis potietur heres.  
 Divite præco natus ab Inacho.  
 Nil interest, an pauper, & infima  
 De gente sub \* Dio morietis,  
 Victima nil miserantis Orci †.  
 Omnes eodem regimur; omnium  
 Venustus urna ferida cecidit  
 Somn exitura, & nos in æternum  
 Exilium impositura cymba ‡.

Lib. ii. ode 3.

\* Sub Dio, the same as *sub Jove*; exposed to the inclemency of  
 the weather. † Pluto. ‡ Charon's bark.

FRENCH

## FRENCH LYRICS.

## MALHERBE.

**T**HIS poet was the first who exhibited the ode in its full perfection in France. Before his time, the French lyrics had indeed given proofs of a great stock of fire and genius; but, having their heads full of the beautiful expressions of the ancient poets, they formed a pompous medley of crude and harsh latinisms and hellenisms, interlarded with points, witticisms, and rhodomontades; and, thus accoutred, they set out upon their Pegasus, like the doughty knights of bold, at a joust or tournament, and, with an air as romantic and full of vanity, *let fly the tremendous volantes of their poetic fury at the very bosom of infinity; and conquerors of the ages, those monsters with a hundred heads, engraved their victories on the very front of ETERNITY.*

Malherbe reduced these unbridled muses to the bounds of order. He taught them decency, and the office that properly belonged to them. He taught them to speak in a clear, just, and proper manner, and with a graceful cadence of verse. He may, in some measure, be looked upon as the father of good taste in French poetry; and, as Mr. Boileau observes, his rules, taken as they are from nature and good sense, may very well serve for rules even to our modern authors. Malherbe had a great deal of fire, but

then it was of that kind which is at once glowing and lasting. He took infinite pains with his verse; and had such a method of managing and disposing the cadence, that it seemed to be half formed beforehand in the very substance of the period. He had no epigrammatical points which end all in a fally. His thoughts were all solid, and discovered themselves at the close of the stanza; but just so much as was necessary to keep up the sense, and hinder the verse from dravling.

Those who would taste Malherbe as he is, must be able to digest a few old words, and not stop at the expression, but be at the pains to examine the idea. The style of this poet is grand, noble, and lofty, full of incidents, and even tender and delicate where the subject requires it. Is there any thing more lofty, and, at the same time, more harmonious, than the two following stanza's, in which he compares Henry the Great to a river that overflows its banks?

Tel qu'à vagues épanduës  
 Marche un fleuve impérieux  
 De qui les neiges fondues  
 Rendent le cours furieux.  
 Rien n'est sûr en son rivage,  
 Ce qu'il trouve il le ravage;  
 Et trainant comme huïllons  
 Les chesnes & leurs racines,  
 Oste aux campagnes voisines  
 L'espérance des moissons.

Tel

Tel & plus épouvantable  
S'en alloit, ce conquérant,  
A son pouvoir indomptable  
Sa colère mesurant.  
Son front avoit une audace  
Telle que Mars en la Thrace;  
Et les éclairs de ses yeux  
Etoient comme d'un tonnerre  
Qui gronde contre la Terre  
Quand elle a fâché les Cieux.

But what a difference between this superb and lofty tone, and that which he employs when he comes to comfort Du Perrier for the loss of his daughter!

Ta douleur, Du Perrier, sera donc éternelle?  
Et tes tristes discours  
Que te met en l'esprit l'amitié paternelle  
L'augmenteront toujours?

This stanza is full of tenderness, and carries with it all that negligence which is so natural to real grief. To proceed,

Le malheur de ta fille au tombeau descendue  
Par un commun trépas,  
Est-ce quelque dédale où ta raison perdue  
Ne se retrouve pas?

The thought of Dedalus or a labyrinth, for they mean the same thing in this place, is very lively, and expressive of the wanderings of a reason that cannot find its way again. *Commun trépas* is a latinism; and at present out of use. Instead



of it we make use of a circumlocution, and say,  
*Le trépas dont personne n'est exempté.*

Mais elle étoit du monde où les plus belles choses  
 Ont le pire destin.  
 Et, rose, elle a vécu ce que vivent les roses,  
 L'espace d'un matin.

It is at the end of this piece that we meet  
 with the famous verses where death is imper-  
 sonated, and represented as a tyrant who spares  
 no one.

*La mort a des rigueurs à nulle autre pareilles :*

*On a beau la prier,*

*La cruelle qu'elle est, se bouche les oreilles,*

*Et nous laisse crier.*

*Le pauvre en sa cabane, où le chaume le couvre,*

*Est sujet à ses loix ;*

*Et la garde qui veille aux barrières du Louvre,*

*N'en défend pas nos Rois.*

*De murmurer contre elle & perdre patience,*

*Il est mal à propos.*

*Vouloir ce que Dieu veut, est la seule science*

*Qui nous met en repos.*

The thought in these two last lines is Horace's ;  
*Durum, sed levius fit patientia quicquid corrigere est  
 nefas. (Ode 24. L. i.)*

But we have not a finer piece of lyric poetry  
 in our language, nor one that has more beauty,  
 force, and spirited fire, than his ode to Lewis  
 XIII. on his departure against the rebellious Ro-  
 chellers. Its beginning sufficiently bespeaks it.

Done,

Donc, un nouveau labeur à tes armes s'apprête,  
 Prends ta foudre, Louis, & vas comme un lion,  
 Donner le dernier coup à la dernière tête  
 De la rébellion.

This beginning is extremely beautiful; and we may apply to it the expression of Pindar on one of his. It is a noble frontispiece, and bespeaks the august palace within. The word *donc* is a latinism (*ergo*) but it is so beautiful and lively a one, and so admirably well placed, that we should be sorry to lose it. *Labeur* is a word at present disused in prose; but it does very well in verse, and cannot be so well replaced by *travail*. *Prends ta foudre, Louis*. Here Lewis appears armed like a god; this is by a metaphor, and the words following, *vas comme un lion*, is by comparison; so that they are wrong who say the metaphor is not preserved in these lines, and that *foudre* has no connection with *lion*. *Donner le dernier coup*. . . . The whole of this verse, together with its cadence, is very happily managed; the thought is just, and the idea strong. Read the stanza again, and you will find it to the full as beautiful as any one of Horace's.

Fais cheoir en sacrifice au Démon de la France  
 Les fronts trop élevés de ces ames d'Enfer,  
 Et n'épargne contre eux pour notre délivrance,  
 Ni le feu, ni le fer.

What force is here! *fais cheoir* is obsolete, but it is very expressive. *Ames d'Enfer* is strong; if our moderns think it too harsh, let them consider the idea it is meant to express.

Affez de leurs complots l'infidèle malice  
A nourri le désordre & la sédition.  
Quitte le nom de juste, ou fais voir ta justice  
En leur punition.

This is lofty, nervous, and, at the same time, easy. *Affez* is a very poetical turn!

Marche, vas les détruire, éteins-en la semence,  
Et suis, jusqu'à leur fin, ton courroux généreux,  
Sans jamais écouter ni pitié ni clémence  
Qui te parle pour eux.

Ils ont beau vers le Ciel leurs murailles accroître,  
Beau d'un soin assidu travailler à leurs forts;  
Et creuser leurs fossés jusqu'à faire paroître  
Le jour entre les morts.

Our poet does not flag in his career; he still maintains his rate. This last stanza is full of energy; the following one is somewhat more smooth and soft:

Laisse-les espérer, laisse-les entreprendre;  
Il suffit que ta cause est la cause de Dieu,  
Et qu'avecque ton bras elle a pour la défendre  
Les soins de Richelieu.

The transition is very happily made in this place. It is a matter of no difficulty to shift dexterously

terously from one object to another, where there is room to prepare oneself for it; but, when one is cramped and confined, it is very seldom that the passage appears so natural as this does. He extols Richelieu, he raises altars to him, and, at last, finishes his eulogium by the following stanza, which is perfectly beautiful, and at the same time intirely plain :

Le Ciel qui doit le bien selon qu'on le mérite,  
Si de ce grand oracle il ne t'eût assisté,  
Par un autre présent n'eût jamais été quitte  
Envers ta piété.

The poet has now let us into the character of the king's enemies : he has acquainted us with the aids he has against them, and we may expect him to be victorious.

Certes, ou je me trompe, ou déjà la victoire,  
Qui son plus grand honneur de tes palmes attend,  
Est aux bords de Charente en son habit de gloire  
Pour te rendre content.

Je la vois qui t'appelle, & qui semble te dire :  
Roi, le plus grand des Rois, & qui m'es le plus cher,  
Si tu veux que je t'aide à sauver ton empire,  
Il est tems de marcher.

Que sa façon est brave & sa mine assurée !  
Qu'elle a fait richement son armure étoffer,  
Et qu'il se connoit bien, à la voir si parée,  
Que tu vas triompher !

Telle en ce grand assaut, où des fils de la Terre  
La rage ambitieuse à leur honte parut :



Elle sauva le Ciel, & rua le tonnerre,  
Dont Briare mourut.

Déjà de tous côtés s'avançoient les approches :  
Ici couroit Mimas ; la Typhon se battoit :  
Et là suoit Euryte à détacher les roches  
Qu'Encelade jettoit.

A peine cette Vierge eut l'affaire embrassée,  
Qu'aussi-tôt Jupiter en son trône remis,  
Vit, selon son désir, la tempête cessée,  
Et n'eut plus d'ennemis.

Ces colosses d'orgueil furent tous mis en poudre,  
Et tous couverts des monts qu'ils avoient détachés :  
Phlégre, qui les reçut, put encore la foudre  
Dont ils furent touchés.

This whole passage is full of that pindaric enthusiasm which transports the souls of those made for enjoying it. What can be more noble, and, at the same time, more pleasing and agreeable, than the image of Victory seated on the banks of the Charente, in a robe of triumph, ready to crown the wishes of the royal warrior ! She calls to him, she speaks to him ; it is indeed in a single word only, but such as is highly worthy of that illustrious personage and of herself ; *Que sa façon est brave !* Here the poet takes a pleasure in viewing him, and, from his appearance, draws the most certain presages, *telle en ce grand assaut.* . . . This digression has been greatly admired : it is quite in the sublime and noble ; and, moreover, contains an allegory, which is at first sight applicable to the king and his enemies. The poet

poet himself makes it very fully to the English, whom he describes trembling, and flying at the sight of the heroes who are led on to battle by Lewis.

Par cet exploit fatal en tous lieux va renaître  
La bonne opinion des courages François,  
Et le Monde croira, s'il doit avoir un maître,  
Qu'il faut que tu le sois.

Here the ode might have finished, and any other poet than Malherbe would have thought his matter exhausted. But we shall presently see what an infinity of fine things he has still left to say.

A justly-founded confidence, mixed with joy, has hitherto inspired all he has sung. He represents to himself the victories of his prince: he burns to share in them, and to lay down his life in fighting for him; but, finding that impracticable on account of his age, he is resolved at least to sing his glory.

O que pour avoir part en si belle aventure,  
Je me souhaiterois la fortune d'Eson,  
Qui, vieux comme je suis, revint contre nature,  
En sa jeune saison!

De quel péril extrême est la guerre suivie,  
Où je ne fisse voir que tout l'or du Levant  
N'a rien que je compare aux honneurs d'une vie  
Perdue en te servant?

Toutes

Toutes les autres morts n'ont mérite ni marque :  
 Celle-ci porte seul un éclat radieux  
 Qui fait revivre l'homme, & le met de la barque  
 A la table des Dieux.

Mais quoi ! Tous les penfers dont les ames bien nées  
 Excitent leur valeur, & flattent leur devoir,  
 Que sont-ce que regrets, quand le nombre d'années  
 Leur ôte le pouvoir ?

Ceux à qui la chaleur ne bout plus dans les veines,  
 En vain dans les combats ont des soins diligens.  
 Mars est comme l'amour : ses travaux & ses peines  
 Veulent de jeunes gens.

Je suis vaincu du tems ; je cède à ses outrages :  
 Mon esprit seulement exempt de sa rigueur,  
 A dequoi témoigner en ses derniers ouvrages  
 Sa première vigueur.

In the following stanza the poet enhances the merit of his verse, only through a poetic pride, that they may appear more worthy of the person to whom he offers them :

Les puissantes faveurs dont Parnasse m'honore,  
 Non loin de mon berceau commencerent leur cours ;  
 Je les possédai jeune, & les possède encore  
 A la fin de mes jours.

Ce que j'en ai reçu, je veux te le produire,  
 Tu verras mon adresse, & ton front cette fois  
 Sera ceint des rayons qu'on ne vit jamais luire  
 Sur la tête des Rois.

The head incircled with rays of light is a very beautiful image of glory. The poet soon after

after seems carried away by the charms of his subject: he thinks himself superior to Amphion; his verse shall perform miracles, and all the universe shall regard with admiration the hero who is the subject of them.

Soit que de tes lauriers ma lire s'entretienne,

Soit que de tes bontés je la fasse parler,

Quel rival assez vain prétendra que la sienne

Ait de quoi m'égalér ?

Le fameux Amphion dont la voix n'empareille

Bâtissant une ville étonna l'Univers,

Quelque bruit qu'il ait eu, n'a point fait de merveille

Que ne fassent mes vers.

Par eux de tes beaux faits la terre sera pleine,

Et les peuples du Nil qui les auront ouïs,

Donneront de l'encens, comme ceux de la Seine,

Aux autels de Louis.

If we read these several passages over again, the whole of the ode will be found reduced to what follows: *Go, Lewis! go forth against thy foes, they have justly deserved to feel the effects of thy wrath; you have wherewithal to conquer them; victory awaits you. Alas! that I cannot likewise go and die in fighting for you! However, I will sing thy victory.* Here is the ground-work and the things; and every one may perceive that this is not the most difficult part in works of taste: scarce any thing more than a tolerable share of good sense is required to furnish it. But then there is a certain elocution, a poetical and metrical elocution,



elocution, which is the gift of a happy genius only. It is the very vital spirit which animates every member, brings them into union, and gives them their play and action. This is easily to be perceived in the work before us; it is all of a piece. The poet continues his course from one end to the other without ever stopping (a).

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(a) Mr. Addison has given us a shining instance of this sublimity of image in our own language, and which, to use the words of a celebrated writer, is as great as ever entered into the thought of man. It is in his poem, called the Campaign, addressed to the Duke of Marlborough, then in the zenith of his power; where the simile of a ministering angel sets forth the most sedate and the most active courage, engaged in an uproar of nature, a confusion of elements, and a scene of divine vengeance. Add to all, that these lines compliment the general and his queen at the same time, and have all the natural horrors heightened by an image that was still fresh in the mind of every reader:

'Twas then great Marlbro's mighty soul was prov'd,  
That, in the shock of charging hosts, unmov'd  
Amidst confusion, horror, and despair,  
Examin'd all the dreadful scenes of war;  
In peaceful thought the field of death survey'd,  
To fainting squadrons sent the timely aid;  
Inspir'd repuls'd battalions to engage,  
And taught the doubtful battle where to rage.  
So when an angel, by divine command,  
With rising tempests, shakes a guilty land,  
Such as of late o'er pale *Britannia* pass'd,  
Calm and serene he drives the furious blast;  
And, pleas'd th' Almighty's orders to perform,  
Rides on the whirlwind, and directs the storm.

The whole poem is so exquisitely noble and poetic, that it may be thought an honor to our nation and language.

RACAN.

## R A C A N.

Racan was a disciple of Malherbe's, and has, as well as him, been the author of some few odes. But the matters are not so close, so compact, as in those of his master : this was a fault common to all his pieces. The form was smooth, flowing, and easy, for his pen was guided by nature alone ; but, as he had not studied the principles of his art, he sometimes wanted that firm foundation, which can alone give a proper consistence to writings of this kind. He has given a version of the Psalms ; and, though his translation is in general but middling, yet there are some places which have great beauties : as for instance, the following from the 92d Psalm :

L'empire du Seigneur est reconnu par-tout,  
Le monde est embelli, de l'un à l'autre bout,  
De sa magnificence.

Sa force l'a rendu le vainqueur des vainqueurs ;  
Mais c'est par son amour, plus que par sa puissance,  
Qu'il regne dans les cœurs.

Sa gloire étale aux yeux ses visibles appas :  
Le soin qu'il prend pour nous, fait connoître ici-bas  
Sa prudence profonde :

De la main dont il forme, & le foudre, & l'éclair,  
L'imperceptible appui soutient la terre & l'onde  
Dans le milieu des airs.

De

De la nuit du chaos, quand l'audace des yeux  
Ne marquoit point encore dans le vague des lieux  
De zénit, ni de zône,

L'immensité de Dieu comprenoit tout en soi,  
Et de tout ce grand Tout, Dieu seul étoit le trône,  
Le royaume & le Roi.

His ode to count Buffy de Bourgogne, which is intirely philosophical, is greatly extolled. It is an invitation to that nobleman to despise false notions of glory, and to enjoy life while it lasts.

Buffy, notre printems s'en va presque expiré,  
Il est tems de jouir du repos assuré,  
Où l'âge nous convie.

Fuyons donc ces grandeurs qu'insensés nous suivons,  
Et sans penser plus loin, jouissons de la vie  
Tandis que nous l'avons.

Que te sert de chercher les tempêtes de Mars,  
Pour mourir tout en vie au milieu des hazards

Où la gloire te mène ?  
Cette mort qui promet un si digne loyer,  
N'est toujours que la mort qu'avecque moins de peine  
L'on trouve en son foyer, &c.

### ROUSSEAU.

After Malherbe and Racan came the celebrated Rousseau, who, by the strength of his verse, the beauty of his rhymes, and the vigour of his thoughts, has almost obliterated the memory of our more ancient writers, especially with those whose delicacy is offended with an antiquated expression.

pression or archaism of style. Could old Corneille keep his ground against the young Racine? Rousseau is doubtless admirable in his verse; his style is sublime, and perfectly well kept up; his thoughts are well connected, and he pushes his poetic fury with an uniform force from beginning to end: all this I will allow; but has he always enough of that pliability, that suppleness, which gives such a grace and ease to the motion of the parts? Is not his force sometimes downright force, and nothing more? But the easiest and best way of forming a judgment, on this head, will be to compare him to Quinault, in those places where this latter approaches nearest to the lyric; or compare *J'ai vu mes tristes journées*, which is, without contradiction, much the softest and sweetest of all his odes, with the chorus in Racine's *Esther*, *Pleurons & gémissons*. The same sentiment reigns through either piece; both the poets have taken many things from the sacred writings. We advance nothing but what every reader of taste will very easily perceive; and it must be owned, that, if Mr. Rousseau possessed many of the qualifications requisite to form a great lyric poet, there were also some which he wanted, or at least did not possess in a more than ordinary degree.

When we would discover the faults of great writers, we must seek for them in the redundancy of that quality which most distinguishingly characterizes them. There is an aptness to be too  
lavish



lavish of what costs no straining for. If they are remarkable for strength and force, their style is apt to be harsh; if lofty and grand, they will sometimes be *outrés*, *overstrained* and romantic; if they delight in niceness and delicacy, they will now and then be too subtle and refined; if in softness and sweetness, sink into effeminacy, and become almost languid and insipid. Homer has given us a very elegant picture of this truth in his heroes, whose characters are each of them distinguished by a particular virtue, and their vices consist precisely in that virtue carried to an excess.

We shall not quote any passages from this author, as he is sufficiently known, and our quotations are already but too large (a).

### ENGLISH LYRICS.

### COWLEY.

Mr. A. Cowley was born in London in the year 1618; his parents were reputable citizens. The first years of his youth were spent in Westminster school, where he soon improved the noble genius with which nature had endowed him. His first inclination to poetry arose from a casual lighting on Spenser's Fairy Queen, when he was

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(a) The choice pieces of this author are to be had in one small pocket volume, elegantly printed, for Desaint and Saillant, rue Saint-Jean de Beauvais, at Paris.

but just able to read; a poem requiring the examination of men, rather than fit for the consideration of a child: but in him it met with a fancy, whose strength was not to be estimated by number in years.

He has been charged with want of choice and elegance in his words. To this it may be answered, that he had no manner of affectation in them; he took them as he found them made to his hands. He understood, few better, all the variety and power of poetical numbers, and practised all sorts with great happiness. If his verses, in some places, seem not as soft and flowing as might be wished, it is to be imputed rather to his choice, than any natural defect in point of genius. He knew that, in diverting men's minds, there should be the same variety as in the prospects of their eyes, where a rock, a precipice, or a rising wave, is often more delightful than a smooth even ground, or a calm sea.

His fancy flowed with great speed, and it was sometimes his misfortune not to be able to keep it from swelling its banks (*a*).

His peculiar excellence has generally been deemed to lie in Pindaric verse. The occasion of his falling into this way of writing was his accidental meeting with Pindar's works, in a place where he had no other books to direct him.

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(*a*) See on this head Spectator, Vol. I. No. 62. and Guardian, Vol. I. No. 16.

He attempted to imitate this sublime author in English, and performed it without the danger that Horace prefaged to the man who should dare attempt it.

He was remarkably happy in hitting off the Horatian style, not only in the numerous and stately pace of his odes and epodes, but in the familiar easeness of his epistles and speeches; but of this there are only two instances preserved; the one, a letter wrote to Mr. M. Clifford; and the following, which is part of an epistle to Mr. Creswell, with which he concludes his preface to his book of Plants.

#### PREFACE to his Book of PLANTS.

More poetry! you'll cry: dost thou return,  
Fond man, to the disease thou hast forsworn?  
'T has reach'd thy marrow, seiz'd thy inmost sense,  
And force or reason cannot draw it thence:  
Think'st thou that Heav'n thy liberty allows,  
And laughs at poet's, as at lover's vows?  
Forbear, my friend, to wound with sharp discourse  
A wretched man that feels too much remorse.  
Fate drags me on against my will; in vain  
I struggle, fret, and try to break my chain.  
Thrice I took hellebore, and must confess,  
Hop'd I was fairly quit of the disease.  
But the moon's power, to which all herbs must yield,  
Bids me be mad again, and gains the field:  
At her command for pen and ink I call,  
And in one morn three hundred rhymes let fall;

Which,

Which, in the transport of my frantic fit,  
 I throw, like stones, at the next man I meet:  
 Ev'n thee, my friend, Apollo-like, I wound;  
 The arrows fly, the string and bow resound.  
 What methods can'st thou study to reclaim,  
 Whom nor his own, nor public griefs can tame?  
 Who in all seasons keep my chirping strain,  
 A grasshopper that sings in frost and rain.  
 Like her whom boys, and youths, and elders knew,  
 I see the path my judgment should pursue;  
 But what can naked I 'gainst armed Nature do?  
 I'm no Tydides, who, a power divine,  
 Could overcome; I must, I must resign.  
 Even thou, my friend (unless I much mistake)  
 Whose thund'ring sermons make the pulpit shake,  
 Unfold the secrets of the world to come,  
 And bid the trembling earth expect its doom,  
 As if Elias were come down in fire,  
 Yet thou at eight do'st to thy glass retire,  
 Like one of us, and (after moderate use  
 Of th' Indian fume, and European juice)  
 Sett'st into rhyme, and do'st thy muse caress,  
 In learn'd conceits, and harmless wantonness.  
 'Tis therefore just thou should'st excuse thy friend,  
 Who's none of those that trifle without end:  
 I can be serious too when business calls,  
 My frenzy still has lucid intervals.

In his softer lyrics he had all the tenderness,  
 delicacy, and variety of Catullus, whose very  
 spirit he has breathed into the English verse, in  
 that inimitable translation, or rather imitation, of  
 his ode on Acme and Septimius, which we shall  
 here



here subjoin for the entertainment of our readers,  
and as a proof of what we have advanced con-  
cerning this truly great poet.

**ACME and SEPTIMIUS out of Catullus.**

*Amor Septimius suos amores*

*Tenus in gremio, &c.*

Whilst on Septimius' panting breast  
(Meaning nothing less than rest)

Acme lean'd her lovely head,

Thus the pleas'd Septimius said:

My dearest Acme, if I be

Once alive, and love not thee,

With a passion far above

All that e'er was called love,

In a Libyan desert may

I become some lion's prey;

Let him, Acme, let him tear

My breast, when Acme is not there.

The god of love, who stood to hear him,

(The god of love was always near him)

Pleas'd and tickl'd with the sound,

Sneez'd aloud; and all around

The little loves, that waited by,

Bow'd, and blest'd the augury.

Acme, inflam'd with what he said,

Rear'd her gently-bending head,

And her purple mouth with joy

Stretching to the delicious boy,

Twice (and twice could scarce suffice)

She kiss'd his drunken, rolling eyes.

My little life, my all (said she)  
 So may we ever servants be  
 To this best god, and ne'er retain  
 Our hated liberty again;  
 So may thy passion last for me,  
 As I a passion have for thee,  
 Greater and fiercer much than can  
 Be conceiv'd by thee a man.

Into my marrow is it gone,  
 Fix'd and settled in the bone;  
 It reigns not only in my heart,  
 But runs, like life, through ev'ry part.

She spoke; the god of love aloud  
 Sneez'd again, and all the croud  
 Of little loves, that waited by,  
 Bow'd, and bless'd the augury.

This good omen, thus from heav'n,  
 Like a happy signal giv'n,  
 Their loves and lives (all four) embrace,  
 And hand in hand run all the race.

To poor Septimius (who did now  
 Nothing else but Acme grow)  
 Acme's bosom was alone  
 The whole world's imperial throne;  
 And, to faithful Acme's mind,  
 Septimius was all human kind.

If the gods would please to be  
 But advis'd for once by me,  
 I'd advise 'em, when they spy  
 Any illustrious piety,  
 To reward her, if it be she,  
 To reward him, if it be he;

With

With such a husband, such a wife,  
With Acme's and Septimius' life.

When he chuses to soar, the bird of Jove never  
reached a nobler height! We gaze at awful  
distance, and, with aching eyes, behold him  
brighten in the meridian rays of his own Phoebus.  
Borne by a whirlwind of poetic fury, he scorns  
the earth, and mounts to sing of wonders.

I leave mortality, and things below,  
I have no time in compliments to waste;  
Farewel to ye all in haste,

For I am call'd to go:  
A whirlwind bears up my dull feet,  
Th' officious clouds beneath them meet,  
And lo! I mount, and lo!  
How small the biggest parts of earth's proud  
titles shew!

Where am I now? Angels and God is here!  
An unexhausted ocean of delight  
Swallows my senses quite,  
And drowns all what, or how, or where,  
Not Paul, who first did thither pass,  
And this great world's Columbus was,  
The tyrannous pleasure could express;  
Oh, 'tis too much for man! but ne'er let it be less.

What compass, what elevation of thought is  
here! what fire, what dignity of expression!  
If any are displeased at the boldness of his meta-  
phors, and length of his digressions, they con-  
tend not against Mr. Cowley, but Pindar him-  
self, whose manner he professedly imitated. If

the

the irregularity of the numbers disgust, they may observe, that this very thing makes this kind of poetry fit for all manner of subjects: the pleasant, the grave, the amorous, the heroic, the philosophical, the moral, the divine, may each of them find a place by this means; in all or most of which our poet has shewn himself a complete master.

He was no less the admiration of every virtuous person for the rectitude and goodness of his life, than he was of the learned for his great genius and extraordinary talents as a writer. He died universally regretted, insomuch that his royal master was pleased to bestow on him the best epitaph, by declaring, "That Mr. Cowley  
"had not left a better man behind him in Eng-  
"land (a).

### D R Y D E N.

The lyric productions of this poet are deservedly held in the highest esteem by all good judges. Among the rest, his *Alexander's Feast*, an ode on St. Cecilia's day, is, without contradiction, the noblest performance of the kind that ever appeared in the English, or perhaps any other language. The turn of the verse is noble, the transitions surprising, the language and senti-

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(a) See Dr. Sprat's (afterwards bishop of Rochester) life of Cowley, from whom most part of what is here said has been taken.



ments just, natural, and heightened : one cannot be too lavish in praise of this ode ; had Dryden never wrote any thing beside, his name had been immortal. It is impossible to read it without experiencing every succession of passion that the poet describes ; we sigh, we weep, we gaze, we start with horror ; or, inflamed with maddening ecstacy, rush forward to the fight, as the divine musician varies the notes on his soul-commanding lyre.

### P O P E.

Mr. Pope's ode on St. Cecilia's day is by many put in competition with that abovementioned by Mr. Dryden ; but a late excellent critic very justly gives the preference to the former, both in point of numbers and harmony.

The ode on solitude was wrote by our poet when he was only twelve years or age, and may be considered as a strong instance of the contemplative and moral turn which was so much the distinguishing characteristic of Pope's mind. But we shall refer those, who are desirous of seeing the genius and character of this celebrated author set in the most judicious point of light, to a treatise lately published by Mr. Wharton purposely on this subject.

There are many other authors in the English language, whose pretensions to the lyric chaplet are founded on performances of distinguished

merit

merit; in the number of which be mentioned, with due honour, the names of Waller, Prior, West, Mason, and Grey; but, as multiplying quotations would swell this work to an immoderate size, we refer our readers to the authors themselves, where they cannot fail of meeting with pleasure and profit, in a degree more than sufficient to repay the labour and pains of an attentive perusal and serious consideration. The beauties of our best poets, like the paintings of the greatest masters, require to be viewed in a proper point of light, if we would behold them in all their glory; to find this demands care and observation.

## CHAP. VII.

A review of the 103d Psalm on the creation of the world.

OUR readers would scarcely have forgiven us, had we quitted this part of our work without having given some example of the sacred lyric, which is so infinitely superior to every thing of the kind among profane writers. David, saith St. Jerome, may supply the place of all the Greeks and Latins together; *David, Simonides nostrer, Pindarus, Alcæus, Flaccus quoque*. Here we meet with the ideal beautiful of the ode realized: the elevated, the tender, the mournful, the vehement, every thing is in its utmost degree of perfection. But what must be our pleasure,

could we taste these works thoroughly, and in the oriental language, which is of all others the noblest and fullest of energy?

We should have inserted in this place the famous song of Moses, as it is given us by Mr. Rollin (*a*), from Mr. Hersan, rhetoric professor in the college Du Pleffis: the public would have been better served; but, as that piece is examined and explained according to the rules of rhetoric, we imagined that it would be necessary to give some other piece to be examined according to the rules of lyric poetry.

The sacred bard, in the 103d (*b*) Psalm, expresses the admiration and gratitude he is struck with on contemplating the works of God. The matter of the poem therefore is a sentiment of admiration; and the object of that admiration is the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, shewed to mankind.

#### The exordium.

“Praise the Lord, O my soul!”

Or as the Latin has it (*benedic*) bless! that is, to praise, celebrate, or give thanks to a benefactor. David begins by declaring the sentiment with which he is inspired, and which he is going to set forth through the whole of his song. But,

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(*a*) Method of teaching and studying the Belles Lettres, Vol. II.

(*b*) In the church of England liturgy it is the 104th.



as this sentiment depends upon the objects by which it is produced, he presents these objects to us, in order to present the sentiment at the same time. We shall find them all in the following descriptions, which may be looked upon as so many poetical pictures, and which we have purposely selected from the rest of the piece, that the reader may the more readily and clearly observe them.

God encompassed  
with glory.  
1st picture.

“ O Lord, my God, thou art become exceeding glorious; thou art  
“ cloathed with majesty and honour,  
“ and deckest thyself with light as it  
“ were with a garment !”

The imagination must dwell a while upon this portrait before it can perceive all its magnificence. The prophet beholds God in all his glory: he appears to him surrounded with flames of fire, and dazzling floods of brightness; this is the garment with which he is covered.

David having fixed his eyes on God himself, and then being desirous to examine his works, ought of necessity to begin by the heavens, which are the seat of his glory; this furnishes the second portrait.

The heavens  
and God who  
reigns therein.  
2d picture.

“ 3. Thou hast spread out the  
“ heavens like a pavilion, whose top  
“ thou hast covered with many waters.”



“ 4. Thou makest the clouds thy chariot, and walkest upon the wings of the wind.

“ 5. Thou makest thy angels spirits, and thy ministers a flaming fire.”

The whole universe, when compared with the grandeur of him that created it, is but as a tent which he raised with the greatest ease. The waters of heaven, *i. e.* the clouds, according to some interpreters, form an immense vault or platform of crystal with which it is adorned: such is the proper signification of the Hebrew word. Under this superb canopy does God traverse the universe from one end to the other, and march in all his glory. The clouds serve him for a chariot; when he would descend, he lowers them: the winds are his coursers, he walks on their wings. He sends forth his ministers, tempests and flames of fire. When the waves are to be raised, and the sea made dry, or parched climates to be moistened with the abundance of his dews, the winds fly to obey his commands. When adulterous cities are to be consumed, or rebellious nations to be laid waste, the fire descends, and God is avenged on his enemies.

*To spread forth the heavens* is an expression full of wonderful energy. It distinctly paints the thing, the action, and the ease, with which the acting cause exerts itself. *Thou mountest* on the clouds as on a triumphal chariot. But what chariot is this that can carry the Great God through the aerial void? *Thou walkest on the wings,*

wings, that is, thou art drawn by winged steeds. Nothing can be more rich, more bold, than this expression.

We have now seen the heavens, the air, the clouds, and God who reigns amidst them. This is the throne itself of God! let us now see his footstool.

The terrestrial globe. 3d picture. "6. Thou hast laid the foundations of the earth within itself, that it should not move from time to time.

"7. Thou hast covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters shall stand in the hills.

"8. At thy rebuke they flee away; at the voice of thy thunder they are afraid.

"9. The mountains lifted up their heads, and the vallies sunk beneath, even unto the place thou hadst appointed for them.

"10. Thou hast set bounds to the waters, which they shall not pass, neither return again to cover the earth."

What a number of sublime strokes are there in this portrait! The earth, in equilibrium, self-balanced in the midst of the air. An immense weight, sustaining itself alone without any other support, and not to be moved from time to time, or in all ages, in *seculum seculi*. The sea surrounds it like a garment. Homer has made use of the same expression, *Ἰσθμὸς ἀπὸ γαίης*, The waters shall stand, or be fixed. This, a poetical figure,

the future for the past. At the time of the creation, while every thing as yet lay confused in the chaos, the waters covered the hills; they were fixed there, *stabant*: but no sooner did they hear the rebuke of the great Creator, than they fled growling away. Then did the mountains lift up their heads, and the vallies sink down beneath, and this globe of the earth took the form that was allotted it. What painting is here! The waters are retired within the great channel prepared for them; they are agitated, they rage and swell, but dare not pass the line marked out for them by the finger of God, *Non transgredientur*.

In the following portrait the prophet represents the fountains, the rains, and the earth, filled with fruitfulness.

The earth  
watered by  
the rivers.  
4th picture.

“ 11. Thou sendest the springs  
“ into the rivers, and the waters  
“ run through the midst of the hills.

“ 12. All the beasts of the field drink thereof;  
“ and the wild ass waiteth to quench his thirst  
“ therein: beside them shall the fowls of the  
“ air have their habitation, and sing among the  
“ branches.

“ 13. Thou waterest the hills from above;  
“ the earth is filled with the fruit of thy  
“ works.”

The prophet here places himself as present at the instant of the creation. He beholds the fountains



fountains bursting from the ground at the word of God, and sees the drowthy animal *wait* for the stream as it flows down the hills. This image is very fine, and expresses in a beautiful manner the trust that the very beasts have in him who nourishes them. There is an expression very like this in Tibullus, applied to the herbage of Egypt, which is watered by the Nile without the help of rain :

*Arida nec pluvio supplicat herba Jovi.*

Nor the parch'd fields invoke the show'ry god.

*Beside them the birds.* . . . The banks of the rivers are planted with trees, where the birds perch, and make the hills around echo with their warblings. These are objects placed as it were in perspective in the picture. Nothing can be more pleasing and elegant.

*Thou waterest.* . . This moisture, joined to a genial heat, serves to unfold every bud in nature, and bring forth the fruits and flowers in their season. The rivers water the vallies and plains ; but what is to become of the hills and mountains ? God has stretched a huge reservoir above them ; the clouds shall drop down to moisten them. Thus shall the whole earth, which is one great assemblage of buds formed by the wisdom and power of the Creator, be made fruitful throughout : but what will it produce ? This we are shewn in the next picture.



The fruitfulness of the earth.  
5th picture.

“ 14. It bringeth forth grafs for  
“ the cattle, and green herb for the  
“ service of man.

“ 15. Thou bringest food out of the earth,  
“ and wine that maketh glad the heart of  
“ man.

“ 16. Oil that maketh him a chearful countenance,  
“ and bread to strengthen his heart.

“ 17. The trees of the field shall be full of sap;  
“ even the cedars of Libanus, which the Lord  
“ hath planted, therein shall the birds make  
“ their nests.

“ 18. The fir-trees shall be a dwelling for the  
“ stork; the high hills a refuge for the wild  
“ goats, and the stony rocks for the conies.”

There is vast fire and force in this enumeration of the principal productions of the earth; and the use they are of to man is elegantly set forth at the same time. The whole is an exact and clear description. The cedars of Libanus, the high hills, the very stony rocks themselves, are destined to some use by the author of nature; one of which is to serve as a habitation and retreat to different creatures.

Man is now placed upon earth, in the midst of all its abundance, and in the full enjoyment of its good things; but what is to be the order of times? Shall man, that is made in the express image of God, lie confounded and mingled with  
the

the brute creation? Is he to wander up and down the fields at the same time with the bear and the lion? No. The Creator has regulated the intervals in time, and appointed each its respective hours.

The distribu-  
tion of time.  
6th picture.

“ 19. He appointed the moon for  
“ certain seasons, and the sun knoweth  
“ his going down.

“ 20. Thou didst make (or place) darkness,  
“ and it was night, in which all the beasts of  
“ the forest do roam.

“ 21. The young lions, roaring after their prey,  
“ do seek their meat from God.

“ 22. The sun riseth, and they gather them-  
“ selves together to be gone, and lay themselves  
“ down in their dens.

“ 23. Man goeth forth to his work and to his  
“ labour till the evening.

“ 24. O Lord! how glorious are thy works;  
“ in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth  
“ is full of thy riches!”

Here the prophet cries out, full of admiration and rapture at the sight of such glorious order. It is plainly to be seen, throughout the whole foregoing description, that he was wrapt up in enthusiasm. The strokes are all sublime. The sun *knows* the end of his course. It is enough to know it; he obeys in silence, and goes on without interruption to reach the appointed goal.

*Thou didst place the darkness.* . . . God said to it, That is thy place, and thou shalt be called *night*. The darkness heard his voice, and placed itself according to his orders: and when it spreads its dark shades over the face of the earth, and the stars yield but a faint and uncertain light, then shall the wild beasts come forth and *roam* securely under its covert. The word *roam* (*pertransibunt*) admirably expresses the wandering of these animals in search of prey, who, in a kind of terror, traverse and fly over a place which they are sensible was not made for them by God. What shall we say of the young lions, *who roar forth their petitions to God*, and ask their food at the hands of their Creator? God hears their voice, and grants them their desire.

*The sun ariseth.* . . . How much more noble is this expression than if the prophet had said, *when the sun arises, they gather themselves together*. But here, the sun is risen (*ortus est sol*) they are already retired every one to his den: *they gather themselves together*. It is a kind of people of the woods who receive orders to retire at the first appearance of the sun, and leave the country free for man, whose business it is to cultivate it, and who has therefore an undoubted right to gather the fruits of it without molestation.

The sea has as yet been mentioned in a cursory manner only, as part of the description of the earth in the third piece. The following one is wholly dedicated to it:

“ 25. The



The sea.  
7th picture. " 25. The great and wide sea also  
" abounds with innumerable creeping  
" things.

" 26. Animals also of all kinds, both great  
" and small, and there go the ships likewise.

" 27. There is the vast Leviathan, whom thou  
" hast made to take his pastime therein."

In this piece the prophet first of all gives us an immense space of waters, the vast deep! filled with all sorts of animals, and some among the rest of such a prodigious size as to bid defiance to storms and tempests. *Draco* in this place signifies monsters, *Leviathan*. The singular number has a much more beautiful effect here than the plural would have had. On the surface of this vast liquid plain we see ships passing, they seem to fly by us. *There go the ships*. One instant we see them, and the next they disappear. This element, which one would think intended to divide nation from nation, becomes the bond of commerce, and serves to bring together people from the most distant parts of the earth.

Earth, sea, air, every thing is full of living creatures, which are supplied with food every day. God alone is their provider; he only opens his hand, and they are filled. This is the subject of the 8th piece.

God nourishing  
all creatures.  
8th picture. " 27. These wait all upon thee,  
" that thou mayest give them meat  
" in due season.

" 28. Thou



“ 28. Thou wilt give it them, and they shall  
 “ gather it, when thou openest thy hand, and  
 “ they are filled with thy good.”

Thus does the careful housewife feed her little brood at home. She opens her hand ; she scatters the grain around ; they all turn to it with greediness, they feed and are satisfied. Attentive to their little wants, she is always at hand at the stated hour, *in tempore.*

Every thing is  
 dependent on  
 the Creator.  
 9th picture.

“ 29. When thou turnest away  
 “ thy face, they are troubled ; when  
 “ thou takest away their breath, they  
 “ die, and return again to their dust.

“ 30. When thou lettest thy breath go forth,  
 “ they shall be made ; and thou shalt renew the  
 “ face of the earth.”

It is impossible to paint in a more bold and masterly manner than in this piece. The whole universe is troubled, and turned upside down, because God hath withdrawn his countenance from it. All creatures return again to their original dust. *Their* is full of energy ; and, as one may easily perceive, contains many things in one word. Instead of *dust*, the Psalmist might have made use of the term *nothing* ; but his intention was to leave the imagination filled with an object, and it is the most vile and humiliating one, and what approaches the nearest to annihilation, or nothing ; it is dust. But the Spirit of God goes forth,

forth, and all is again revived. Where now can we meet with such sublime strokes as these?

Every one of these pieces is founded on a sentiment. We find joy and admiration every now and then breaking forth in singular, unexpected, and, very often, surprising turns. Sometimes the prophet addresses himself to God, sometimes he speaks to himself, sometimes to all nature. His expressions throughout discover an imagination full of astonishment, and a soul full of rapture, and carried far above herself. In the remaining part of this song the sentiments are still more strong and lively, but then they are not so confounded and blended with the ideas.

The close.

“ 31. The glorious majesty of the Lord shall  
“ endure for ever: the Lord shall rejoice in his  
“ works.

“ 32. The earth shall tremble at the look of  
“ him; if he do but touch the hills, they shall  
“ smoke.

“ 33. I will sing unto the Lord as long as I  
“ live; I will praise my God while I have  
“ being.

“ 34. So shall my words be pleasing to him,  
“ and I will delight in the Lord.

“ 35. As for sinners, let them be consumed  
“ out of the earth, and let the ungodly come to  
“ an

“an end. Praise thou the Lord, O! my soul,  
“praise the Lord.”

This is the conclusion, and is pure sentiment. After having gone through so many sublime pieces, every one of which conveyed nearly the same impression to the heart, it was necessary to strike out in some distinguishing manner, by way of conclusion. Accordingly we find it full of a noble fire, and abounding with beautiful irregularities and singular turns.

We do not meet in any profane writers with that noble sublime that so abounds in the sacred songs. If we inquire the reason of this, we shall find, that it is because they had neither the same matter to build upon, nor the same spirit to inspire them, in their composition. The religion they sang was a false one; their heroism was a mistaken notion; and their fights and battles had only a chimerical glory for their motive. In those songs, dedicated to the praise and glory of the true God, we may, in the very foundation of the subject, observe true greatness drawn from the fountain-head. The beauties and virtues we admire are true ones, and expressed by the most just and solid sentiments. In the one, it is always man that writes, that labours his subject; we perceive the pains it costs him, and, consequently, discover his weakness, and find out his vices, his prejudices, his ignorance, and his depravity: in the other, it is the Spirit of God that



that breathes inspiration throughout. Every thing is full, easy, and clear, and bears the stamp of him who sported in the creation of an universe. However great the profane writer may be, he is in possession of but a small spark of that divine fire that burnt within the prophets, and has but a very slender portion of that virtue with which they abounded. In fine, allowing Horace and Pindar to have been really inspired by nature, from whom they took their happiest touches, David and Moses were so by the author of nature himself, by him who alone possesses the first models of the beautiful: it was he who guided their pencil, and furnished them with the matter, ideas, colours, and principal strokes. Is it then to be wondered at, if they have so far the superiority over the profane writers?

But an observation occurs in this place, viz. That as nature, such as it exists, is no other than the Creator's plan carried into execution, therefore those who copy after nature, and those who are inspired by the author of nature, must necessarily unite in one and the same point; since nature is alike the object of both, and the rules of imitation arising from the object imitated, has had the same rules both in the sacred and profane authors.

The lyric kind will be noble, rich, sublime, and bold. It requires striking turns, transports, flashes of fire, and enthusiastic wanderings. It despises all appearance of order. It shuns circumstantial



cumstantial details, scientific specifications and subtilities: it must have objects that strike the senses and rouse the heart. These are its rules: to these both sacred and profane writers must have conformed; or they could not have pleased us. The whole difference between them is, that the profane writers have confined themselves to the sphere of humanity; whereas David, taking a supernatural flight, has transported himself into the very bosom of the Deity, and thence taken his subjects, and all the vigour that was necessary to carry him through his undertaking.

After this, is it not a little singular to imagine, that profane writers alone are capable of furnishing us with beautiful models? This might hold good, if beauty consisted in the mere art of elocution; but, if it consists chiefly in truth, grandeur, and propriety, where shall we meet with these qualities so eminently displayed as in the sacred writings? We should regard the words, I am sensible; but to confine ourselves wholly to them would be like those who concern themselves wholly about the dress, and think nothing of the person.

Before we quit this part of lyric poetry, we beg leave to present our readers with that famous hymn of Mr. Addison, on the glories of heaven and earth, from these words of the Psalmist: *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work. One day telleth ano-*  
ther,

ther, and one night certifieth another. There is neither speech nor language, but their voices are heard among them. Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words to the end of the world. In which, if he does not intirely come up to the beautiful strokes of poetry, the exalted strain, and the sublime and noble manner of expressing the thoughts, so striking and conspicuous in the original, he at least approaches nearer to it by many degrees than any poet of our own times, of whatever nation, or, perhaps, of the more enlightened ages of Greece or Rome: but let him speak for himself.

## I.

The spacious firmament on high,  
 With all the blue etherial sky,  
 And spangled heavens, a shining frame,  
 Their great original proclaim:  
 Th' unwearied sun, from day to day,  
 Does his Creator's pow'r display,  
 And publishes to ev'ry land  
 The work of an Almighty hand.

## II.

Soon as the ev'ning shades prevail,  
 The moon takes up the wond'rous tale,  
 And, nightly to the list'ning earth,  
 Repeats the story of her birth:  
 Whilst all the stars that round her burn,  
 And all the planets in their turn,  
 Confirm the tidings as they roll,  
 And spread the truth from pole to pole.

## III.

What though, in solemn silence, all  
 Move round the dark terrestrial ball?  
 What though nor real voice nor sound  
 Amid their radiant orbs be found?  
 In reason's ear they all rejoice,  
 And utter forth a glorious voice;  
 For ever singing as they shine,  
 The hand that made us is divine.

## CHAP. VIII.

## OF ELEGY.

*Verfibus impariter junctis querimonia primum,  
 Post etiam inclufa eſt voti ſententia compos.*

HORAT. in Art. Poet.

Grief did at firſt ſoft elegy employ,  
 That now oft dries her tears to ſing of joy.

**A**S elegy, according to Horace, and agreeable to the general received notion of it, is intirely devoted to the emotions of the heart, we ſhall ſpeak of it in this place as a kind of dependent upon the ode.

Both theſe kinds of poetry are alike as to matter, only that the ode takes in all ſorts and degrees of ſentiments, and elegy confines itſelf to thoſe alone that ariſe from joy or ſorrow.

But I am not clear whether joy is a ſentiment that properly enters into the preſent idea we have of elegy: for, was any perſon to ſay he had  
 written

written an elegy on his late good fortune, we should think it an odd sort of expression.

But it was different with the Latins. With them the name of elegy belonged to the form of the poem, as well as to the subject-matter (*a*). They, after the example of the Greeks, composed their plaintive poems (or elegies) in hexameter and pentameter verse; from whence every poem that was wrote in those verses was called an elegiac poem, or elegy. With us, as there is no fixed or particular form for this sort of poesy, it can be distinguished no otherwise than by the sentiment which it expresses.

Perhaps, in this respect, we have the advantage of the Latins: for they are obliged, in order to preserve as much as possible the beauty of their verse, to finish the sense with the distich at the end of every second line: this was very ill suited to the expression of grief, which is always irregular and disordered. Elegy should appear with all the negligence natural to affliction and distress; her hair loose and dishevelled; clad in a mourning habit, and walking with a pensive step. When she laments, it must be in some such manner as Phædra does in Racine (*b*).

This

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(*a*) Rollin's Hist. Arts and Sciences of the Ancients, Vol. iii. p. 28.

(*b*) This speech is most beautifully copied (I might rather have said translated) from Euripides, by Mr. Smith, in his Phædra and Hippolytus, an excellent play, though greatly inferior in many  
ma-



This is the plaintive tone, and interrupted pace, proper to elegy.

No Greek elegy of this sort is come down to us, except that inserted by Euripides in his *Andromache*, which consists only of fourteen lines. But we have many remaining of Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid, who were famous among the Latins in this way. Tibullus is natural, smooth, and elegant. Propertius is rather more nervous, sometimes even to a degree of harshness, from his too deep erudition. As for Ovid, every one knows that his fault was having too much wit himself, and thinking his reader had too little. He says every thing that is to be said upon a subject, and for that reason very often says too much.

It is very rare to meet with any good elegies among the moderns. They are, for the most

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material circumstances, and particularly the character of Phædra, to the Greek. In our English play, Phædra, on her entrance, begins:

Stay, virgin, stay, I'll rest my weary steps;

My strength forsakes me,

Why blaze these jewels round my wretched head?

Why all this labour'd elegance of dress?

Why flow these wanton curls in artful rings?

O! how I long to lay my weary head

On tender flow'ry beds and springing grass;

To stretch my limbs beneath the spreading shades

Of venerable oaks! to slake my thirst

With the cool nectar of refreshing springs!

• part,

part, either flat and languid, or else run into the other extream of being too pointed and epigrammatical (*a*). Fortunately for young people, this sort of poetry is not very essential towards forming their tastes.

Several of the eclogues which we have quoted in the first volume of this work, may be ranked under the title of elegies; as the Death of Adonis by Bion, that of Daphnis by Virgil, and the Iris of Madame Deshoulières; and most part of the odes in this article, particularly that of Horace on the death of Quintilius, and Malherbe's epistle to Du Perrier (*b*).

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ENGLISH

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(*a*) I cannot here forbear doing justice to the memory of our illustrious countryman Milton, who so far excels in this way, in his *Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, pieces now in every one's hand, and from which a quotation would be consequently superfluous, that these alone, had he left no other, would have been immortal monuments of his poetical genius. They are written in the very spirit of the ancients, and equal any thing of the kind when Greece was in its glory.

(*b*) Elegiac epistles are a species of elegy invented by Ovid. We have two epistles of this kind in the English language. That of Sappho to Phaon, and of Eloisa to Adelard, by Mr. Pope, that are masterly examples of this species of writing, which is a great improvement on the Greek elegy, to which its dramatic nature renders it greatly superior. "It is indeed (says a very ingenious writer) no more than a passionate soliloquy, in which the mind gives vent to the distresses and emotions under which it labours; but, by being directed and addressed to a particular person, it gains a degree of propriety that the best conducted soliloquy in a tragedy must ever want. Our impatience under any pressures of grief, and disorder of mind, makes such passionate expostulations

with

## ENGLISH ELEGIAC WRITERS.

We have several excellent pieces of elegiac poetry in our language; but, among all the performances of this kind, those of Mr. Pope and Mr. Grey deservedly claim the preference. We shall subjoin a specimen from each to conclude this article.

## MR. P O P E.

His elegy on the death of an unfortunate young lady is a piece dictated by sorrow itself, and might well serve as a model for elegiac writing, had we no other left. It was written from the heart; the occasion of it was real, and therefore remarkably tender and pathetic. The striking abruptness of the beginning cannot fail of alarming the reader, and strongly fixing his attention!

What beck'ning ghost, along the midnight shade,  
Invites my steps, and points to yonder glade?  
'Tis she—but why that bleeding bosom gor'd,  
Why dimly gleams the visionary sword?

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“ with the persons supposed to cause such uneasinesses very natural.  
“ Judgment is chiefly shewn by opening the interesting complaint  
“ just at such a period of time as will give occasion to the most  
“ tender sentiments; and the most sudden and violent turns of  
“ passion to be displayed.”

With regard to the language, it must be tender and pathetic, and the numbers mellifluous and flowing.

He

He then goes on to expostulate with the heavenly powers for inspiring her soul with such exalted sentiments, and then leaving her to combat by herself all the ills of love and fortune :

Oh ever beauteous, ever friendly ! tell,  
Is it, in heav'n, a crime to love too well ?  
To bear too tender, or too firm a heart,  
To act a lover's or a Roman's part ?  
Is there no bright reversion in the sky,  
For those who greatly think, or bravely die ?

Why bade ye else, ye pow'rs ! her soul aspire  
Above the vulgar flight of low desire ?  
Ambition first sprung from your bless'd abodes ;  
The glorious fault of angels and of gods :  
Thence to their images on earth it flows,  
And in the breasts of kings and heroes glows.  
Most souls, 'tis true, but peep out once an age,  
Dull sullen pris'ners in the body's cage :  
Dim lights of life, that burn a length of years,  
Useless, unseen, as lamps in sepulchres ;  
Like eastern kings, a lazy state they keep,  
And close confin'd to their own palace sleep.

From these perhaps (ere nature bade her die)  
Fate snatch'd her early to the pitying sky,  
As into air the purer spirits flow,  
And sep'rate from their kindred dregs below ;  
So flew the soul to its congenial place,  
Nor left one virtue to redeem her race.

He next addresses himself to the person who was the uncle and guardian of the unhappy fair, whom he reproaches in the most lively manner,



and denounces an execration upon him and his posterity that might strike dread to the most hardened heart:

But thou false guardian of a charge so good,  
Thou mean deserter of thy brother's blood!  
See on these ruby lips the trembling breath,  
These cheeks now fading at the blast of death;  
Cold is that breast which warm'd the world before,  
And those love-darting eyes must roll no more.  
Thus, if eternal justice rules the ball,  
Thus shall your wives, and thus your children fall:  
On all the line a sudden vengeance waits,  
And frequent heres shall besiege your gates.  
There passengers shall stand, and pointing say,  
(While the long fun'ral blacken all the way)  
Lo these were they, whose souls the Furies steel'd,  
And curs'd with hearts unknowing how to yield.  
Thus, unlamented, pass the proud away,  
The gaze of fools, and pageant of a day!  
So perish all, whose breast ne'er learn'd to glow  
For others good, or melt at others woe.

The tenderness of the following lines is very remarkable:

What can atone, thou ever injur'd shade,  
Thy fate unpity'd, and thy rites unpaid?  
No friend's complaint, no kind domestic tear,  
Pleas'd thy pale ghost, or grac'd thy mournful bier,  
By foreign hands thy dying eyes were clos'd,  
By foreign hands thy decent limbs compos'd,  
By foreign hands thy humble grave adorn'd,  
By strangers honour'd, and by strangers mourn'd!

He then goes on to make a beautiful poetical use of her being denied the rites of sepulture:

What tho' no friends in sable weeds appear,  
Grieve for an hour, perhaps, then mourn a year,  
And bear about the mockery of woe  
To midnight dances, and the public show?  
What tho' no weeping loves thy ashes grace,  
Nor polish'd marble emulate thy face?  
What tho' no sacred earth allow thee room,  
Nor hallow'd dirge be mutter'd o'er thy tomb?  
Yet shall thy grave with rising flow'rs be dress'd,  
And the green turf lie lightly on thy breast:  
There shall the morn her earliest tears bestow,  
There the first roses of the year shall blow;  
While angels with their silver wings o'er shade  
The ground now sacred by thy reliques made.

The following lines are most inchantly beautiful, and convey a noble lesson of morality and contempt of worldly pomp and splendor:

So peaceful rests, without a stone, a flame,  
That once had beauty, titles, wealth, and fame.  
How lov'd, how honour'd once, avails thee not,  
To whom related, or by whom begot;  
A heap of dust alone remains of thee,  
'Tis all thou art, and all the proud shall be!

The poet's apostrophe to himself, with which the elegy concludes, is charmingly pathetic, and perhaps has no equal in our language:

Poets themselves must fall like those they sung,  
Deaf the prais'd ear, and mute the tuneful tongue.

Ev'n he, whose soul now melts in mournful lays,  
 Shall shortly want the gen'rous tear he pays;  
 Then from his closing eyes thy form shall part,  
 And the last pang shall tear thee from his heart;  
 Life's idle business at one gasp be o'er,  
 The muse forgot, and thou belov'd no more!

Let us only compare this elegy with the so  
 much boasted one of Malherbe to Du Perrier,  
 cited by our author in the foregoing sheet, and  
 leave to the voice of nature, and the emotions of  
 the heart, to give the preference.

### G R E Y.

This poet's elegy written in a country church-  
 yard is deservedly esteemed a master-piece in its  
 kind. It is a piece which abounds with pa-  
 thetic images, intermixed with elegant reflec-  
 tions, and comes nearer the manner of Milton,  
 as Dr. Hill justly observes in No. I. of his In-  
 spector, than any thing that has been published  
 of the kind since the time of that poet. Who-  
 ever will look into his Lycidas, one of the best  
 poems he ever wrote, will not fail to see a strik-  
 ing likeness, and to own that this elegy does not  
 suffer in the comparison.

The author introduces himself walking over  
 the graves of the deceased humble villagers, in  
 a melancholy and contemplative humour; sur-  
 veying from an elevated spot the country round  
 him, while there is scarce light for the prospect.

Supposing

Supposing him in such a situation, we shall acknowledge an uncommon beauty and propriety in the following passage :

Now fades the glimm'ring landscape on the sight,

And all the air a solemn stillness holds;

Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,

And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Or that, from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r,

The moping owl does to the moon complain

Of those who, wand'ring near her sacred bow'r,

Molest her ancient solitary reign.

When the subject is familiar, with what an easy elegance, with what a beautiful simplicity, does he adapt his language ! In speaking of the peaceful inhabitants of the earth under his feet, he says :

For them the blazing hearth no more shall burn,

Or busy housewife ply her evening care ;

Nor children run to lisp their sire's return,

Or climb his knee the envy'd kisses to share.

On the contrary, when he has occasion to lament the peasant's loss of the advantages of education, what can be more lofty than

— Knowledge to their eyes, her ample page,

Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll

Or what can be more beautifully adapted to the subject than his description of the rude monuments and inscriptions over the graves of the humble dead he is there meditating on ?



Yet, even these bones from insult to protect  
 Some frail memorial still erected nigh,  
 With uncouth rhymes, and shapeless sculpture deck'd,  
 Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.  
 Their name, their years, spelt by th' unfetter'd muse,  
 The place of fame and elegy supply;  
 And many a holy text around she strews,  
 That teach the rustic moralist to die.

He then introduces the following apposite and poetical reflections:

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,  
 The swallow twitt'ring from the low-built shed,  
 The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,  
 No more shall rouse them from their humble bed.

The imaginary rustic's description of himself, in his walks of poetic rapture, is exquisitely fine:

Hard by yon wood, now frowning as in scorn,  
 Mutt'ring his wayward fancies, wou'd he rove.

The variation of the expression, in the account of his being missed at his usual places of resort, is very masterly:

One morn I miss'd him on th' accusom'd hill,  
 Along the heath, and near his fav'rite tree:  
 Another came; nor yet beside the rill,  
 Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he.

In fine, his character of himself, his expectations, and his content, are at once justly, greatly, and pleasingly expressed in the epitaph of the

supposed rustic, which we shall here give the reader intire; as in a piece, so generally beautiful, an extract does but maim and disfigure it:

Here rests his head, upon the lap of earth,

A youth to fortune and to fame unknown;

Fair science frown'd not on his humble birth,

And melancholy mark'd him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,

Heav'n did a recompence as largely send:

He gave to mis'ry all he had, a tear,

He gain'd from Heav'n ('twas all he wish'd) a friend:

No farther seek his merits to disclose,

Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,

(There they alike in trembling hope repose)

The bosom of his Father and his God.

## SECTION IV.

### Of DIDACTIC POETRY in general.

**H**ITHERTO we have beheld poetry reigning in the regions of fiction as in her own natural empire. Solely taken up with pleasing and affecting, she worked only upon the human actions and passions; and, to make her pieces the higher finished, she selected such strokes only as struck her fancy, and from thence formed an artificial whole, which had no truth but that of imitation.

But, in didactic poetry, the object becomes totally changed: the end proposed here being to instruct, to trace the laws of reason and sound sense; to direct the arts, and to adorn and embellish the truth, without divesting it of any of its rights. This is a kind of usurpation of poetry on prose.

The natural basis of this latter is instruction; and from being more at freedom in its expressions and turns, and without the restraint of poetic harmony, it establishes its ideas with much greater ease and perspicuity, and, consequently, conveys them, really as they are, immediately into the mind of those it would instruct. Accordingly we find most historical narratives, and the arts and sciences in general, treated of in prose. The reason is very obvious and simple. When we are concerned in doing an important piece of service, it is natural to take the readiest and surest method of doing it. Now this, so far as relates to instruction, is found in prose.

But, nevertheless, as there were found some, who, to an extensive knowledge, joined the talent of versification, they began to think of joining in their works what they thus found united in their genius, and to adapt the charms of expression and poetical harmony to matters in themselves purely doctrinal. From hence came the *Works and Days* of Hesiod, the *Sentences* of Theognides, the *Therapeutics* of Nicander, the *books* of Oppian on *Hunting and Fishing*; and, among

among the Latins, the poems of Lucretius on *the Nature of Things*, the *Georgics* of Virgil, the *Pharsalia* of Lucan, and some others of the same kind.

But in all these pieces there is nothing poetical but the form. The matter subsisted before, and only wanted dressing up. The things are not furnished by fiction on the rules of imitation, but by truth itself; and therefore imitation carries its rules only to the expression: so that a didactic poem may in general be defined *Truth put into verse*, in contradistinction to the other kind of poetry, which is *Fiction put into verse*. The two extremes are the pure didactic and the pure poetical.

There are an infinite number of productions which hold the mean between these two extremes, in which fiction and truth are intermixed, and mutually assist each other; and such works are more or less poetical or didactic, according as the one or other of these prevail. There is scarcely any pure fiction, even in what are properly called poems; and, again, there is scarcely any truth without some mixture of fiction in didactic poems: nay, this happens sometimes in prose. The interlocutors in Plato's dialogues and Cicero's philosophical pieces are feigned, and the sustained character of their elocution and style in itself poetical. The same may be said of the discourses with which Titus Livius has embellished his history, which have



no more foundation in reality than those of Juno or Æneas in Virgil's poem; and the only difference between them is, that Liyy has taken his from historical facts, and Virgil from fabulous history: but both the one and the other have dressed them up intirely after their own fancy.

In didactic poetry we include satire, the epistle in verse, the epigram, and such other lesser poems, where the business is not so much with fiction, as to contain a fine-turned thought, a biting stroke, or a delicate sentiment.

But, that we may proceed in order, we shall first of all treat of the didactic poem, properly so called; next of satire, and then of the epigram.

## ARTICLE I.

### Of the DIDACTIC POEM.

**H**AVING already given the definition of this poem, viz. *Truth put into verse*, we shall now proceed to describe its several kinds, and point out its rules in a few words.

#### CHAP. I.

The several kinds of didactic poems.

**T**HERE are as many different sorts of didactic poetry as there are various kinds of truth. Some poems only set forth real actions and

and events in order as they happened, without adjusting or disposing the parts according to the rules of taste, or going higher than natural causes.

These may be called historical poems. Of this kind are, Nonnus's Life and Actions of Bacchus, in 50 books; Lucan's Pharsalia; the Punic War, by Silius Italicus, and several others (a).

Others again are employed in establishing some philosophical doctrine, or settling principles of physiology, morality, or metaphysics. Here we meet with deep reasoning, citing of authorities and examples, and drawing natural inferences. These are called philosophical poems. Such are the works of Lucretius (b).

Lastly, there are others that contain only observations relating to practice, or precepts for regulating an operation, the success of which depends upon some necessary precaution. Of this kind are, the Georgics of Virgil; Horace; and Boileau's Art of Poetry, &c. (c).

These

(a) We have several poems of this kind in the English language, particularly Davideis, a sacred poem, by Mr. Cowley.

(b) There are some elegant specimens of this sort in the Muse Anglicanæ; as the poems on the Barometer, on the Circulation of the Blood, and Dr. Hale's Vegetable Statics.

(c) And, in English, the inimitable Cowley's book of Plants; Mr. Pope's two essays on Criticism and on Man; the Art of Preserving Health, by Dr. Armstrong; Cyder, a poem, by Mr. John Philips; the Fleece, by Mr. Dyer, &c.

In that species of didactic poetry, which is properly called the descriptive, we have many very beautiful performances; such as

Cooper's

These three sorts of poems, though different from each other, are not however so much so, but that they can sometimes lend each other mutual assistance. The arts and sciences are brothers and sisters; this is a fundamental principle that cannot be too often repeated while we are upon this head: their treasures are in common amongst them, and they take what best suits them wherever they meet with it. Hence we sometimes meet with historical facts and observations drawn from the arts in a philosophical poem; and, in like manner, in historical and didactic poems, we find philosophical reasonings and principles. But these come in only as auxiliaries, or else by way of refreshing the subject: for variety is the repose of the mind; and, when it grows weary of one kind or colour, we must offer it another, to exercise some fresh faculty, and give time to that which is already fatigued to recover itself, and recruit its strength.

Besides this, what liberties do not the poets indulge themselves in? Sometimes suffering themselves to be carried away by the force of their own imagination, and weary of truth, which seems to put a yoke upon their necks, they take flight, and, abandoning themselves to fiction, make a full use of all the privileges of genius:

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Cooper's Hill, by Sir John Denham; Grongar Hill, by Mr. Dyer; Windsor-Forest, and the Temple of Fame, by Mr. Pope; and those incomparable poems of Mr. Thomson's, the Seasons.

from

from that instant they cease to be historians, philosophers, or artists; they are poets only. Thus Virgil ceases to be the husbandman, when he relates the fables of Aristæus and Orpheus (a): he then quits truth for probability, and becomes the master and creator of his subject. But this does not hinder the whole of his poem from being in the didactic kind. The episode in his poem is like a fine statue in a house; a piece purely ornamental in a building designed for use.

Didactic poems, like all other works, have, when completely finished, a beginning, middle, and end. The subject is proposed, treated of, and completed. Historical poems have their actions, passions, and actors, as well as poems of fiction: but philosophical and practical poems have none of these. Those warm the heart; these enlighten the mind, or direct its acting faculties. This is the sum of what we had to say concerning the matter of the didactic poem. We now come to the form.

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(a) Book iv. of his *Georgics*.

CHAP.



## CHAP. II.

## The form of didactic poetry.

**E**VERY thing is known to the muses, not only what is, but whatever may be, on earth, in hell, or heaven, and through all space, real or possible. And if, on this account, poets have the liberty of putting into the mouths of the muses the things they had a mind to feign, and which did not in reality exist, to give them thereby the greater credit; with much more reason may they do so by those which are true and real, and make them dictate the verse that relates to sciences, history, or the method of forming and perfecting arts. On this principle is founded the poetical form that constitutes the didactical or preceptive poem.

An author has always been allowed the privilege of chusing the form of his work; and, so far from imputing it to him as a fault, that he makes use of some artful method to render his subject more agreeable, we are rather pleased with him for it; provided he keeps up the same strain throughout, and is strictly faithful to his plan. And, on this account, the readers of Plato are obliged to him for having given a dramatic form to his dissertations on philosophy, and making the hero of his dialogue such a person as Socrates, whose name, though a borrowed one, adds great weight

weight to what he delivers. Tully has employed the same artifice in his philosophical works, wherein he introduces sometimes Crassus, sometimes Cato, or other celebrated Romans, discoursing with each other. And both these authors have taken great care to make them speak according to their known characters in history, agreeable to the precept of Horace, *Famam sequere*.

Didactic poets have not thought proper to make simple mortals speak, but generally invoke some deity; and then, as supposing themselves heard, they speak like inspired persons, and nearly in the same manner as they suppose the gods would have spoken on such occasion. And on this supposition are founded all the rules of didactic poetry, so far as relates to the form.

These rules are some of them general, and others special.

### C H A P. III.

#### The general rules of didactic poetry.

I. **D**IDACTIC poets conceal the order of things to a certain degree. They seem to give themselves up to their genius, and to follow the matter as it presents itself, instead of being solicitous about managing it by any method that favours of art. They avoid whatever has the appearance of rule and method; but, however,  
not

not so as to place the death of their hero before his birth, nor the vintage before the coming in of summer. The irregularity they allow themselves in is only in the lesser parts, where it appears rather the effect of negligence and forgetfulness, than of ignorance. In the greater and principal parts of the works, they necessarily follow the natural order of things.

2. The second rule is a kind of consequence of the first. In virtue of the right that poets have taken to themselves of treating their matter in a free and uncontrouled manner, they now and then blend things in their works which are foreign to the subject, or only occasionally belong to it; and this they do to have an opportunity of shewing their superior erudition, and the commerce they have with the muses. Such are the episodes of Aristæus and Orpheus (mentioned before) and the metamorphose of a nymph into a river, a rock, &c. (a)

### 3. The

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(a) Mr. Philips in his poem on Cyder, and Mr. Dyer in his *Fleece*, have each of them many fine instances of the pleasing effects arising from a proper observance of these two rules in pieces of the didactic kind.

The first of these authors, among other classical beauties, has closely copied Virgil, in throwing many artful digressions into his poem. He opens his second book with an address to Lord Harcourt's son, then abroad on his travels in Italy, and afterwards returns to his subject, with great dexterity, in the following lines:

Mean

3. The third rule regards expression. Here they arrogate to themselves all the privileges of poetical

Mean while (altho' the Massie grape delight,  
Pregnant of racy juice, and Formian hills  
Temper thy cups, yet) wilt thou not reject  
Thy native liquors. Lo! for thee my mill  
Now grinds choice apples, and the British vats  
O'erflow with generous cyder. *Cyder, B. II.*

This poet, speaking afterwards of the pernicious effects of drunkenness, and of the discords and quarrels arising from this vice, slides with great art and address into the civil wars and dissensions that have frequently troubled the repose of this kingdom. And, when he comes to mention the last great rebellion, very dexterously flings in the following line:

Yet was the cyder land unstain'd with guilt.  
This at once recalls the mind of the reader to the subject which the author seemed to have forsaken during so long a digression. Of the same kind are his descriptions of the destruction of Old Aricornium, the praises of Herefordshire, and the moral characters of the most celebrated poets; at the conclusion of the first, and the effects of the union at the end of the second book, when after saying, that

Where'er the British spread  
Triumphant banners, or their fame has reach'd,  
Diffusive to the utmost bounds of this  
Wide universe—

He concludes fully and appositely to his subject:

— Silurian cyder borne  
Shall please all tastes, and triumph o'er the vine.

[See Wharton's Essay on the Writings and  
Genius of Pope.]

Mr. Dyer is no less frequent in his excursions, which are always appropriated, and easily reconduct us to his subject.

But, of all the various kinds of digressions, those of a pathetic nature, if they can be introduced with propriety, will have the best effect,



poetical style: they heighten their ideas by substituting bold and forcible metaphors in the room of common terms, or by adding other accessory ideas, in the most glowing and picturesque epithets, to inforce, augment, or modify the principal ones. They make use of elevated turns, a freedom of construction, and a figurative way of speaking, and dispose the thoughts after a curious and singular manner. They scatter strokes of an abstruse and uncommon erudition. In fine, they

effect. Such is the episode of Amelia and Lavinia, in Thomson's Seasons. Mr. Dyer has not indeed thought proper to insert any such interesting narratives in his Fleece, but then he abounds in pathetic strokes, and particularly in exhortations to benevolence. As in his recommendation of country workhouses, B. iii. pag. 96, His reflections on the slave-trade, B. iv. p. 129, 130, and many others. But there is one passage at the beginning of his second book, which we cannot refuse ourselves the pleasure of quoting, as he therein so humanely recommends benevolence to the brute creation:

Thro' all the brute creation, none, as sheep,  
To lordly man such ample tribute pay:

For him their udders yield nectareous streams,

For him their downy vestures they resign;

For him they spread the feast: ah! ne'er may he

Glory in wants, which doom to pain and death

His blameless fellow-creatures. Let disease,

Let wasted hunger, by destroying live,

And the permission use with trembling thanks,

Meekly reluctant; 'tis the brute beyond:

And gluttons ever murder when they kill.

Ev'n to the reptile ev'ry cruel deed

Is high impiety

See the Monthly Review, Vol. XVI.

take

take every method that they imagine likely to persuade their readers, that it is something more than human that is speaking to them, by that means to throw astonishment over their minds, and render themselves completely masters of their attention (a).

Though Horace's Art of Poetry is wrote in the most simple style, it is far from being an argument against the principle we have here advanced; which is, that a didactic poem should always have a style suitable to the particular kind of subject it treats of, and the person who

(a) With respect to the language of didactic poetry, it has been observed, that Virgil chiefly excelled in this particular. The same may be said of the author of the Fleece; for Virgil's Farmer does not toss the dung about with more majesty than Dyer's Weaver does the shuttle: so true it is, that genius can almost ennoble every subject, however mean or inconsiderable. What, for instance, can be more poetically expressed than the following description of long wool in the fleece?

The long bright lock is apt for hairy stuffs;  
But often it deceives the artist's care,  
Breaking unuseful in the fleecy comb:  
For this long spongy wool no more increase  
Receives, while winter petrifies the fields;  
The growth of autumn stops. And what the Spring  
Succeeds with rosy finger, and spins on  
The texture? yet in vain she strives to link  
The silver twine to that of autumn's band.

Boileau has observed, that whatever Virgil touches he turns to gold. What a noble change has this one simple incident undergone in the hands of Mr. Dyer, whose lines, those especially which are distinguished by Italics, fall very little short of any of the same nature in the great Mantuan himself. *Ibid.*

is supposed to treat of it. If a deity, it should be in the tone of a god: if it is Socrates, he should speak like a philosopher, full of understanding, reason, and wit; if Cato, then we should hear the judicious citizen, and the man immoveable in his sentiments of virtue. But, when Horace writes a letter in his own name to one of his particular friends, he should make use of the most simple style, and never rise but with his subject. The simplicity of Horace therefore makes nothing against the elevated strain of Virgil in his Georgics, nor of Vida, or even Boileau, in their poetries. For, though the last named author does not make any invocation, yet as it is not a letter, and that he begins in a lofty and elevated tone, he is judged inspired in virtue of the established custom on that head, and the received notion that poets are the interpreters of the gods.

#### CHAP. IV.

##### The special rules.

**O**VER and above the general rules of didactic poetry, there are some particular observations which regard each different kind.

In an historical poem it is allowed to have the strokes strongly marked, and made more bold and luminous; the objects are thrown more forward, and you in a manner see them. A deity is supposed to paint here, which, as it sees every thing

thing distinctly and without confusion, its pencil executes them in the same manner: it recurs with ease to first causes, and unfolds the secret springs of action; and sometimes even mounts to supernatural causes. Livy, in relating the history of the Punic war, has given us the events in his narrative, and the political causes in the discourses he has put into the mouths of his actors; but he ought still to have confined himself within the bounds of natural knowledge, as being only an historian. Silius Italicus, who was a poet, relates the same facts as Livy, but then he paints through the whole of his narrative, and always endeavours to shew us the objects themselves; whereas the historian often contents himself with speaking of them or drawing them.

Philosophic poetry should above all others have a tendency to clearness. The end of science is to enlighten the mind; therefore the method here should be more plain and perspicuous than in any other poem, nor is it permitted to throw in digressions that may any wise interrupt the thread of reasoning. On the same account it forbids the use of striking figures and poetical expressions, unless where they conduce to the perspicuity, in giving a body to the thoughts; for it would favour too much of meanness to sacrifice neatness and perspicuity to the *éclat* of a beautiful word. And accordingly we find Lucretius constantly pursuing his object. He never steps out of the way, in the middle of his reasoning, to amuse himself



himself at random with fine descriptions that no wise conduce to his end. Some few he has indeed interspersed here and there, which are not immediately necessary to his subject; but then he has taken care to dispose them in such a manner, either before or after his arguments, that they serve either to prepare the mind for what is to follow, or else to refresh it after it has been obliged to exert itself.

As for poems of the preceptive kind, Horace has given a very plain and concise rule in regard to them, *Quicquid præcipies, esto brevis*. Brevity is what pleases and strikes us above any thing else in this kind. This brevity, when joined to clearness, as Horace supposes it to be, has several advantages: 1. The precept is by this means easier comprehended, it is the sooner learned, and more closely retained, so as not to be lost again, *Ut cito dicta percipiant animi docilis teneantque fideles*. But, as professed teaching is in itself dry and heavy, a poet, who understands his art, will now and then throw in an incident, by way of exercise for the mind, or accompany his precepts with instances and examples properly introduced. Sometimes he will content himself with letting the examples themselves serve as precepts; sometimes he will support them with facts from history, enliven and raise them with entertaining allegories, or pave the way for them by agreeable images. In short, whenever he is apprehensive of tiring or disgusting his readers, he

he will intirely quit that particular species for a while, and throw himself into the epic or dramatic, in such a degree as he finds most agreeable to the tone of his performance, which is ever to be preserved in the midst of the boldest excursions.

## CHAP. V.

## English didactic writers.

**T**HE English language abounds with great variety of elegant pieces of the didactic kind; but, of all the writers who have distinguished themselves this way, the first rank is due to Mr. Pope, Mr. Prior, and Mr. Thomson: the Essay on Man by the first; Solomon, in three books, by the second; and the Seasons of the latter, are pieces that will be read with admiration and pleasure, as long as there remains the least taste for the elegance and purity of English poetry.

The frequent quotations, which occur in the course of this work from the former of these authors, will excuse us from passing him by under this head in favour of the two latter, whom we have not yet had an opportunity of introducing to the acquaintance of our young reader. We shall therefore proceed to

Mr.

## MR. PRIOR.

This celebrated poet was born in 1664, and, from a low beginning, rose to a very honourable and distinguished rank in the state.

Mr. Prior, by the suffrage of all men of taste, holds the first rank in poetry, for the delicacy of his numbers, the wittiness of his turns, the acuteness of his remarks, and the amazing force of his sentiments. The style of this author is likewise so pure, that our language knows no higher authority, and there is an air of originality in his minutest performances.

The performance for which he is most distinguished is his *Solomon*, a poem of the didactic kind, in three books; the first on knowledge, the second on pleasure, and the third on power. There are few poems to which this is second, and it justly established his reputation as one of the best writers of his age.

This sublime work begins thus:

Ye sons of men, with just regard attend,  
Observe the preacher, and believe the friend,  
Whose serious muse inspires him to explain,  
That all we act, and all we think, is vain;  
That in this pilgrimage of seventy years,  
O'er rocks of perils, and thro' vales of tears,  
Destin'd to march, our doubtful steps we tend,  
Tir'd of the toil, yet fearful of its end:  
That, from the womb, we take our fatal shares  
Of follies, fashions, labour, tumults, cares;

And,

And, at approach of death, shall only know  
 The truths which from these pensive numbers flow,  
 That we pursue false joy, and suffer real woe.

After an inquiry into, and an excellent description of, the various operations and effects of nature, the system of the heavens, &c. and upon our not being fully acquainted with them, the first book concludes :

How narrow limits were to wisdom given !  
 Earth she surveys ; she thence would measure heav'n.  
 Thro' mists obscure, now wings her tedious way,  
 Now wanders dazzled, with too bright a day ;  
 And, from the summit of a pathless coast,  
 Sees infinite, and in that light is lost.

In the second book the uncertainty, disappointment, and vexation, attending pleasure in general, are admirably described ; and, in the character of Solomon, is sufficiently shewn, that nothing debases majesty, or indeed humanity, so much as giving the reins to our passions :

When thus the gath'ring storms of wretched love  
 In my swol'n bosom with long war had strove ;  
 At length they broke their bounds ; at length their  
 force  
 Bore down whatever met its stronger course,  
 Laid all the civil bounds of manhood waste,  
 And scatter'd ruin, as the torrent pass'd.

The third book treats particularly of the troubles and instability of greatness and power, considers man through the several stages and condi-



tions of life, and has some excellent reasoning upon life and death. On the last are these lines :

Cure of the miser's wish, and coward's fear,  
Death only shews us what we knew was near:  
With courage therefore view the pointed hour,  
Dread not death's anger, but expect its power;  
Nor nature's laws with fruitless sorrow mourn,  
But die, oh mortal man ! for thou was't born.

The poet has likewise these similies on life :

As smoke, that rises from the kindling fires,  
Is seen this moment, and the next expires ;  
As empty clouds by rising winds are tost,  
Their fleeting forms no sooner found than lost :  
So vanishes our state, so pass our days ;  
So life but opens now, and now decays :  
The cradle and the tomb, alas ! so nigh,  
To live is scarce distinguish'd from to die.

### M. R. THOMSON.

This excellent bard, from whom his country derives the most distinguished honour, was born at the beginning of the present century. He had most peculiar and powerful talents for descriptive poesy, which makes so agreeable a part in the didactic kind ; professed teaching being highly disagreeable to the natural mind of man ; as it implies a superiority of understanding over the person instructed.

Nature, which delights in diversifying her gifts, does not bestow upon every one a power  
of

of displaying the abilities she herself has granted to the best advantage. Hence it was that the earlier parts of Mr. Thomson's life discovered very few marks of that great genius, which afterwards raised him to so high a degree of eminence amongst the poets.

“ Thomson (says Mr. Wharton (*a*)) was blessed with a strong and copious fancy; has enriched poetry with a variety of new and original images, which he painted from nature itself, and from his own actual observation: his descriptions therefore have a distinctness and truth, which are utterly wanting to those poets who have only copied from each other, and have never looked abroad on the objects themselves. Hence that nauseous repetition of the same circumstances; hence that disgusting impropriety of introducing what may be called a set of hereditary images without proper regard to the age, climate, or occasion, in which they were formerly used.”

The first poem of Mr. Thomson's, which gained him any reputation from the public, was his *Winter*, though he had private approbation for several of his pieces long before his *Winter* was published. This is perhaps the most finished, as well as most picturesque, of any of the *Four Seasons*. The scenes are grand and lively. It

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(*a*) Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope, sect. ii. p. 42.

is in that season that the creation appears in distress, and nature assumes a melancholy air; and an imagination so poetical as Thomson's could not but furnish those awful images which fill the soul with a solemn dread of those vapours, and storms, and clouds, he has so well painted in this poem; the induction of which has been justly celebrated for its sublimity, in which few poets ever rose to a greater height. It is contained in the fifteen following lines:

See winter comes to rule the varied year,  
 Sullen and sad, with all his rising train!  
 Vapours, and storms, and clouds, be these my theme,  
 These that exalt the soul to solemn thought,  
 And heav'nly musing: welcome kindred glooms,  
 Congenial horrors, hail!— With frequent foot,  
 Oft have I in my pleasing calm of life,  
 When nurs'd by careless solitude I liv'd,  
 Oft have I wander'd thro' your rough domain;  
 Trod the pure virgin snows, myself as pure;  
 Heard the winds blow, or the big torrents burst;  
 Or seen the deep-fermenting tempest brew'd  
 In the red evening sky. Then pass'd the time,  
 'Till, from the lucid chambers of the south,  
 Look'd out the joyous spring, look'd out and smil'd.

How full, particular, and picturesque, is this assemblage of circumstances that attend a very keen frost in a night of winter!

Loud rings the frowning earth, and hard reflects  
 A double noise; while, at his ev'ning watch,  
 The village dog deters the nightly thief;

The

The heifer lows ; the distant water-fall  
 Swells in the breeze ; and, with the hasty tread  
 Of traveller, the hollow-sounding plain  
 Shakes from afar. ————— ver. 735.

As the introduction of this poem has been much praised, so the conclusion has likewise a claim to applause, for the tenderness of the sentiments, and the pathetic force of the expression :

'Tis done !—Dread winter spreads her latest glooms,  
 And reigns tremendous o'er the conquer'd year.  
 How dead the vegetable kingdom lies !  
 How dumb the tuneful ! horror wide extends  
 Her desolate domain. Behold, fond man !  
 See here thy pictur'd life : pass some few years,  
 Thy flow'ry spring, thy summer's ardent strength,  
 Thy sober autumn fading into age,  
 And pale concluding winter comes at last,  
 And shuts the scene —————

The poem of Winter meeting with universal applause, Mr. Thomson was induced to write the other three Seasons, which he finished with equal success. His Autumn was next given to the public, and is the most unfinished of the four ; it is not, however, without its beauties, of which many have considered the story of Lavinia, naturally and artfully introduced, as the most affecting. The story is in itself moving and tender. It is perhaps no diminution to the merit of this beautiful tale, that the hint of it is taken from the book of Ruth in the Old Testament.



The author next published the Spring, the introduction to which is very poetical and beautiful:

Come, gentle spring, ethereal mildness, come,  
And, from the bosom of yon dropping cloud,  
While music wakes around, veil'd in a shower  
Of shadowing roses, on our plains descend.

It is addressed to the countess of Hertford, with the following elegant compliment:

O Hertford! fitted or to shine in courts,  
With unaffected grace; or walk the plains,  
With innocence and meditation join'd  
In soft assemblage; listen to the song,  
Which thy own season paints; while nature all  
Is blooming and benevolent like thee——

The descriptions in this poem are mild, like the season they paint; but, towards the end of it, the poet takes occasion to warn his countrymen against indulging the wild and irregular passion of love. This digression is one of the most affecting of the whole piece; and, while he paints the language of a lover's breast, agitated with the pangs of strong despair and jealous transports, he, at the same time, dissuades the ladies from being too credulous in affairs of gallantry. He represents the natural influence of the spring, in giving a new glow to the beauties of the fair creation, and firing their hearts with the passion of love:

The shining moisture swells into her eyes,  
 In brighter flow ; her winking bosom heaves  
 With palpitations wild ; kind tumults seize  
 Her veins ; and all her yielding soul is love ;  
 From the keen gaze her lover turns away,  
 Full of the dear extatic pow'r, and sick  
 With sighing languishment. Ah then, ye fair !  
 Be greatly cautious of your sliding hearts ;  
 Dare not th' infectious sigh ; the pleading look,  
 Down-cast and low in much submission dress'd,  
 But full of guile. Let not the fervent tongue,  
 Prompt to deceive with adulation smooth,  
 Gain on your purpos'd will. Nor in the bow'r,  
 Where woodbines flaunt, and roses shed a couch,  
 While ev'ning draws her crimson curtains round,  
 Trust your soft minutes with betraying man.

Summer has many manly and striking beauties, of which the hymn to the Sun is one of the sublimest and most masterly efforts of genius that can well be imagined.—There are some hints taken from Cowley's hymn to Light.—Mr. Thomson has subjoined an hymn to the Seasons, which is not inferior to the foregoing in poetical merit.

The Four Seasons considered separately, each Season, as a distinct poem, has been judged defective in point of plan. There appears no particular design ; the parts are not subservient to one another ; nor is there any dependence or connection throughout ; but this perhaps is a fault almost inseparable from a subject, in itself so diversified, as not to admit of such limitation.

He has not indeed been guilty of any incongruity; the scenes, described in spring, are all peculiar to that season, and the digressions, which make up a fourth part of the poem, flow naturally. He has observed the same regard to the appearances of nature in the other seasons; but then, what he has described in the beginning of any of the seasons, might as well have been placed in the middle, and that in the middle as natural towards the close. So that each season may rather be called an assemblage of poetical ideas than a poem, as it seems written without a plan.

Mr. Thomson's poetical diction in the Seasons is very peculiar to him; his manner of writing is intirely his own: he has introduced a number of compound words, converted substantives into verbs, and, in short, has created a kind of new language for himself. Though his style is sometimes harsh and inharmonious, and sometimes turgid and obscure; and though, in many instances, the numbers are not sufficiently diversified by different pauses; yet is this poem on the whole, from the numberless strokes of nature in which it abounds, one of the most captivating and amusing in our language, and which, as its beauties are not of a fugacious kind, as depending on particular customs and manners, will ever be perused with delight (a).

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(a) Wharton's Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope, sect. ii. page 42.



These observations on the character of Thomson might be still augmented by an examination and developement of the beauties in the loves of the birds, in SPRING, verse 580; a view of the torrid zone, in SUMMER, verse 626; the rise of fountains and rivers, in AUTUMN, verse 781; a man perishing in the snows, in WINTER, verse 277; and the wolves descending from the Alps, and a view of winter within the polar circle, verse 809; which are all of them highly-finished originals.

## ARTICLE II.

## OF SATIRE.

## CHAP. I.

## The history of Satire.

**S**ATIRE has not been at all times the same either in foundation or form. The satire of the Greeks differed from that of the Romans; and with these latter it has undergone such extraordinary changes, that it is scarce possible to trace it through all its variations.

With the Greeks it was a sort of middle entertainment between tragedy and comedy, and was characterised by its actors: these were neither heroes, nor common men, nor gods, but such personages as a Polyphemus, an Autolycus, a Sisyphus, &c. If at any time heroes or men appeared in it,



they had only the second place. It had choruses which were always composed of young and old satyrs; the latter of these, called Sileni, always spoke with an air of gravity and wisdom. It was from among them that the master, governor, and foster-father of Bacchus was chosen. The young satyrs were characters made to enliven the scene by their drolleries and arch replies, sometimes carried even to buffoonery and grossness. These poems had a style of poetry peculiar to themselves; and the actors had likewise their proper gestures, method of declamation, dances, and dresses, which belonged neither to tragedy nor comedy (*a*). We have nothing of this kind of drama left but the Cyclops of Euripides.

The Romans gave the name of satire, *satira*, to their first poetical productions, if they may be so called: for we are not speaking here of the Saturnian measure, which was only a kind of regular prose; nor of the Fescennine (*b*), which was but so many dialogues adapted to each other.

The Tuscans were the first that brought satire to Rome; and it was at that time no more than a kind of song, by way of dialogue, the whole merit of which consisted in the force and liveliness of the repartee. These pieces were called

(*a*) See Horace's Art of Poetry, v. 208 to v. 236, *infra*.

(*b*) These verses were so called from Fescennia, a city of Etruria, or Tuscany, from whence they were brought to Rome.

satires, as some say, from the Latin word *satūra*, which signifying a plate, charger, or bason, in which the various sorts of first-fruits were offered all together and without distinction to the gods, it was thought a very apt and figurative title for works wherein every thing was confounded and thrown together without any kind of order or regularity either of matter or form.

Livius Andronicus, a Greek by birth, having exhibited the first regular play that ever appeared at Rome, satire began to change its form and name, and put on something of the dramatic; and in that manner made its appearance upon the stage, sometimes before, sometimes after the principal piece, and sometimes in the middle of it; whence it received the different appellations of *isodium*, prelude or entry, *ισόδιον*; *exodium*, exode or epilogue, or *ἐξόδιον*; and *ἑμβόλον*, or interlude (*a*). These were the two first forms of satire with the Romans.

Under Ennius and Pacuvius, who appeared some time after Andronicus, satire resumed its former name, on account of the strange mixture of forms that appeared in the works, especially those of Ennius, who employed indiscriminately all sorts of verse, without ever giving himself the trouble to adjust them to each other, as Horace has done in his odes.

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(a) See Livy, L. II, c. vii.

Terentius Varro took still greater liberties than Ennius, in his satire intitled *Menippea*, from its resemblance with those of Menippus, the Grecian Cynic. (a) This species of satire was not only composed of several kinds of verse, but Varro introduced prose into it, in which there was besides a mixture of Greek and Latin; so that it had far the greatest right to the name of satire of any work, on account of the extravagance and irregularity of its form. The work of Petronius, that of Seneca upon the death of Claudius, and of Boetius upon the consolation of philosophy, are all satires of the same kind with this of Varro (b).

Last of all came Lucilius, who fixed the constitution of satire, and exhibited it such as we find it in Horace, Persius, [and Juvenal, and the writers of our own times. From thenceforward the name of satire was only given to the medley of things, and not of forms. Satires are so called, as being a confused mass of invectives against mankind, their hopes, fears, resentments, foolish pleasures, and intrigues :

*Quidquid agunt homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas,  
Gaudia, discursus, nostri est Farrago libelli.* Juv. Sat. I.

(a) Quintil. L. X. c. i.

(b) In English we have some few of the same kind, though not mixed with prose as Varro's were: such are mother Hubbard's tale in Spenser; and the Absalom and Achitophel, and Mac Flecknoe, of Mr. Dryden.

## C H A P. II.

## Its definition.

**F**ROM what has been said, satire may be defined a sort of poem in which the vices of mankind are attacked in an open manner.

I call it *a sort of poem*; because, after what we have said on didactic poetry, it is evident that satire is only a discourse in verse; it is a portrait, and not a fancy-piece.

But, to remove all doubts upon this head, let us examine what is understood by a true poem.

If this name is given in general to every production in verse, it is evident that satire is a poem. But every one knows that this part alone is not sufficient: was Livy's to be turned into verse, it would still make no other than a history.

If it was sufficient to constitute a poem, that it had a certain degree of fire and spirit, then would satire again be a poem; for most satirists have fire and spirit. But, then, every discourse in rhetoric would likewise be a piece of poetry.

But, if it is necessary that the things themselves should be truly poetical; that is to say, created, feigned, imagined by the poet, either in all or some of the parts; then is not satire a poem, at least not in the same manner as fable, pastoral, comedy, tragedy, or the epic?

Accord-



According to Horace, there are three qualifications requisite to form a poet, a fruitful and happy genius, *ingenium cui sit*; it is this genius that furnishes the things, and creates the poetical beings or bodies. Next he must be a soul almost divine; a breath to animate these beings, and infuse life into them, *cui mens divinior*: and, lastly, he must be endowed with a poetic elocution; which, as we have elsewhere remarked, should always be elevated, and raised above the common mode of prosaic expression, *atque os magna sonaturum*. If we apply these three qualifications to the species of poetry now under consideration, we shall find some particular pieces which possess them all: as, for instance, the third and fourth satires of Juvenal; as to others, they are for the most part poems, only by having passed through the lips of a poet; in the mouth of an orator they would have been mere prose.

We have added in our definition of satire, that its object is to attack openly the vices of mankind. This makes one of the differences between satire and comedy; this latter attacking vice in an oblique and concealed manner. She presents some general portraits to mankind, the lineaments of which are borrowed from different models; and leaves it to the spectators to take the lesson, and draw such instructions therefrom as he thinks proper. Satire, on the contrary, points directly at the person, and says, It is you;

It

It is Crispin, a monster whose vices are not counterballanced by one single virtue.

### CHAP. III.

There are two kinds of satire.

**A**S there are two sorts of vices, the one more serious than the other, there are likewise two sorts of satire; one of which has somewhat of the nature of tragedy, *Grande Sophocleo carmen bacchatur biatu*, as Juvenal's; the other, which partakes of the comic, *admissus circum precordia ludit*, and is that made use of by Horace.

Some satires abound mostly with gall and bitterness, *fel*; and others with acrimony, sourness, *acetum*; others again have nothing but mirth and liveliness (salt) in their composition, *sal*. But there is a salt that gives a relish, and a salt that is caustic.

The satiric gall proceeds from hatred, ill humor, injustice: acrimony comes from hatred only and from humor. Sometimes humor and hatred are wrapped up together, and then the satire is a sour-sweet.

The salt that relishes does not prevail in the composition, it only takes off the insipidity, and thereby pleases every one; it is of a delicate nature. The piercing, the caustic, salt always prevails above every thing else, and is an evident sign of a malignant disposition. The cutting salt occasions severe pain; a person must be malignantly disposed

disposed that employs it. Besides these, there is the hot iron that burns, and takes away a piece of the flesh with the eschar. This is dictated by fury, cruelty, and inhumanity. We shall see examples of all these several kinds of satirical strokes (a).

It

(a) Mr. Dryden has furnished us with the strongest instance of this kind of satire in the character he has drawn of a famous prelate of his time, under the name of *Buzzard*. The whole passage is so beautiful, the words so exquisitely chosen, the painting so lively, and the distinctions so nice and just, that it would be unpardonable to deprive the reader of such a quotation:

A portly prince, and goodly to the sight,  
He seem'd a son of *Anach* \* for his height;  
Like those whom stature did to crowns prefer;  
Black-brow'd and bluff, like Homer's Jupiter;  
Broad-back'd and brawny, built for love's delight;  
A prophet form'd, to make a female proselyte.  
A theologian more by need than genial bent,  
By breeding sharp, by nature confident,  
Int'rest in all his actions was discern'd,  
More learn'd than honest, more a wit than learn'd.  
—— His native clime he fled;  
But brought the virtues of his heaven along;  
A fair behaviour, and a fluent tongue;  
And yet with all his arts he could not thrive,  
The most unlucky parasite alive.  
Loud praises to prepare his paths he sent,  
And then himself pursu'd his compliment;  
But, by reverse of fortune chac'd away,  
His gifts no longer than their author stay:  
He shakes the dust against th' ungrateful race,  
And leaves the stench of ordures on the place.

\* A famous giant mentioned in scripture.

Or

It will not be very difficult, after this analysis, to determine what particular kind of spirit commonly animates the satirist. It is not that of a philosopher, who, without ever being discomposed, paints the charms of virtue and the deformity of vice; nor of an orator, who, heated with an amiable zeal, endeavours to reform;

Oft has he flatter'd, and blasphem'd the same;  
For in his rage he spares no sovereign's name:  
The hero and the tyrant change their style,  
By the same measure that they frown or smile,  
When well receiv'd by hospitable foes,  
The kindness he returns is to expose:  
For courtesies, tho' undeserv'd and great,  
No gratitude in fellow-minds beget,  
As tribute to his wit, the churl receives the treat.  
His praise of foes is venomously nice,  
So touch'd, it turns a virtue to a vice,  
A Greek and bountiful forewarns us twice.

— He uncall'd his patron to controul,  
Divulg'd the secret whispers of his soul;  
Stood forth th' accusing Satan of his crime,  
And offer'd to the *Moloch* of the times.  
Prompt to assail, and careless of defence,  
Invulnerable in his impudence,  
He dares the world; and, eager for a name,  
He thrusts about and justles into fame.  
Frontless and satire-proof, he scours the streets,  
And runs an *Indian* muck at all he meets:  
So fond of loud report, that not to miss  
Of being known (his last and utmost bliss)  
He rather would be known for what he is.

DRYD, HIND and PANTHER.

man-



mankind, and bring them over to the paths of virtue; neither is it that of a poet who thinks of nothing but making himself admired in exciting terror and compassion; nor yet that of a gloomy Misanthrope, who hates mankind too much to wish to make them better. It is neither an Heraclites who weeps over our misfortunes, nor a Democritus that laughs at them. What is it then?

It seems as if there was a certain cruelty wrapped up in embryo in the heart of every satirist, and concealed under the mask of a zeal for the cause of virtue, that it may at least have the pleasure of tearing vice to pieces. There is in this sentiment a mixture of goodness and wickedness, a hatred for vice, and, at the same time, a contempt of mankind; a desire of vengeance, and an indignation at not being able to compass it otherwise than by words: and that from hence it would appear, that if by chance the satire should amend mankind, the most the satirist could do in that case would be not to be angry at himself for it. We are now considering satire according to the general idea of it only, and such as appears to result from those productions which bear the most distinguishing marks of it in their composition.

This very spirit is one of the principal points in which satire differs from criticism. The only object of this last is to preserve pure and unadulterated the ideas of good and true in the pro-

productions of taste and genius, without any regard to the author, or ever touching upon his talents or any thing that belongs personally to him. Satire, on the contrary, endeavours to wound the person himself; and, if it is at the pains to wrap up the envenomed shaft in some ingenious turn, it is only to procure the reader the pleasure of imagining that it is the wit only which he approves.

Though works of this kind are doubtless of a blamable nature in themselves, they may nevertheless be read with a great deal of profit, and are the most proper antidotes to productions of an effeminate and softening cast. For here we meet with that rough, home-spun advice, of which we sometimes stand in need, and could expect to meet with only from people who were angry with us; but, in reading them, we should be upon our guard to preserve ourselves from being infected by the contagious spirit of the poet, which would quickly divest us of a virtue on which our own happiness, and that of society, in a great measure depends.

#### CHAP. IV.

The form of satire.

**S**ATIRE may be divided with regard to form and character, and measure and kind of verse.

The

The form of satire is in itself indifferent, as no distinction on that side can in any-wise affect its foundation; it is always satire, so long as it is dictated by a spirit of invective. It is commonly in one or other of the three following forms, viz. Narrative, or a simple recital of abuses in the poet's own person; such is the first of Juvenal; Dramatic, or that wherein several persons discourse together, whether they be nameless, as in the first of Persius; or have names, as Damasippus and Cassius; Mixed satire, or a compound of both the former, as that fine one of Horace, *Ibam forte viâ sacrâ.*

As to the measure and kind of verse, Lucilius has sometimes made use of the Iambic; but, Horace having always employed the Hexameter, that is now become the standing measure. Juvenal and Persius made use of no other; and our French satirists keep to the Alexandrine, which answers to it.

## CHAP. V.

Characters of the principal satirists among the ancients.

### LUCILIUS.

**C**AIUS Lucilius, a Roman knight, and of an illustrious family, was born at Aurunca, a town in Italy, in the 605th year of Rome (a).

(a) Some say at Sueſſa, a town in Campania. Vell. Pat. l. II. c. ix. Euseb. in Chron.



he turned his poetical talent intirely to satire. As he was a person of the strictest conduct himself, and by nature an admirer of decency and order, he set himself up for a declared enemy to all manner of vice (a). Among other objects of his poetical resentment, he has fallen most bitterly upon one Lupus, and Mutius, *genuinum fregit in illis*. He composed thirty books of satires, of which some fragments only are come down to us; and, if we believe the judgment that Horace (b) has passed upon this writer, we have no great reason to regret the loss. He represents him to us indeed as a poet of a fine taste, and delicate in his railery, *facetis, emanctæ naris*; but hard and stiff in his compositions, and his style loose and poor; incapable of taking the pains necessary in writing, that is to say, in writing well; for to write much was his fault. He is compared by the same poet to a river that carried a great deal of mud along with its cur-

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(a) His pen made the conscious bad tremble, as if he had pursued them sword in hand:

*Ense velut strido, quoties Lucilius ardens  
Infrenuit, rubet auditor cui frigida mens est  
Criminibus, tacita sudant præcordia culpa.*

Juv. Sat. I.

Satire's keen sword, when good Lucilius wields,

Astonish'd guilt before the victor yields;

A cold sweat stands in drops on every part,

And rage succeeds to tears, revenge to smart.

(b) Sat. iv. Lib. I.

rent;



rent; or rather, as Julius Scaliger observes, that had no current at all.

It is to be wondered at that a critic of Quintilian's profound judgment and taste should differ in opinion with Horace in this point. "For my part (says he) I find surprising erudition and a noble liberty in him, which gave his works poignancy with abundance of salt;" *Nam & eruditio in eo mira, & libertas, atque inde acerbitas & abunde salis (a)*. But surely Horace must have been particularly attentive to the judgment he formed of him, as he himself was employed in the very same manner of writing, and was often compared to this poet; and, besides, there was a great number of men of letters, who, either through their fondness for antiquity, through a desire of distinguishing themselves, or else out of envy and hatred to their cotemporaries, made no scruple to place him above all other poets. Therefore, certainly, if Horace had had never so great an inclination to be partial, he had too much cunning and prudence to shew it on this occasion. And what he says of Lucilius is the more likely to be just, as that poet lived at a time when letters were but in their infancy in Italy: his prodigious facility at writing, being under no regulation, naturally carried him into the fault with which Horace reproaches him, of having nothing but pure genius to recommend

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(a) Lib. X. c. i.

him, and being like a great fire which casts forth a vast deal of smoke.

He is said to have died at forty-six years of age, but that is hardly probable; for Horace calls him old man, where, he says, Lucilius confided all his secrets, and whatever had happened to him in life, to his books, as to faithful friends.

*Ille velut fidis arcana sodalibus olim  
Credebat libris*

*Quo fit ut omnis*

*Votiva pateat veluti descripta tabella*

*Vita senis.*

Sat. i. L. II.

Behold him frankly to his book impart,

As to a friend, the secrets of his heart:

Hence the *old man* stands open to your view,

Tho' with a careless hand the piece he drew.

FRANCIS.

## HORACE.

Quintus Horatius Flaccus was of Venusium, and, as he says himself (a), the son of a freed-man: he was born in the 688th year of Rome. Our poet, improving the advantage of being born in the most delightful age of the Roman learning, exhibited satire with every grace it was capable of receiving; heightening it only just so much as was sufficient to please the delicate, and to render vice and folly contemptible.

(a) Sat. vi. L. I.

His

His satire discovers no more than the sentiments of a polite philosopher, who is concerned to see the absurdities of mankind, though he sometimes diverts himself with them, and affords for the most part only general portraits of human life; and, if it now and then enters into particular circumstances of persons and things, it is done not so much to offend any one, as to enliven the subject, and put the moral, as we have said before, into action. His names are almost all of them fictitious: those that are real, are of such persons only who were universally decried, and had no longer any pretence to reputation. In a word, the genius that inspired Horace was neither malicious nor morose, but that of a delicate friend to the true and the good; taking mankind as it found them, and esteeming them oftener rather objects of compassion, than of hatred or ridicule.

The title he originally gave his satires and epistles sufficiently bespeaks this character. He called them *sermones*, discourses, conversations, reflections, made between a few friends on the lives and characters of mankind; and many of the learned have endeavoured to restore this title as the most agreeable to the spirit of the poet, and his manner of treating things. His style is plain, delicate, sprightly, and full of moderation and gentleness; when he corrects a fool, a fop, or a miser, he does it in so nice a manner, that the wounded hardly feels any smart.

For

For the style of his poetry and beauty of versification, (especially in his satires) he has been equalled by many to Virgil himself; but, in the simple, nothing can be more finished or elegant. One may every-where trace the ease and delicacy of the fine gentleman, who is always sufficiently master of his subject to reduce it to the very point he thinks proper, without taking in the least from its dignity. He says the brightest things with as much ease as others do common ones, and affects only so much negligence, as serves to add a greater grace to his sense.

## P E R S I U S.

After Horace came Aulus Persius Flaccus, who was born at Volaterræ, a city of Tuscany. He was of the equestrian order, and related or allied to persons of the first rank. This poet was of a very gentle and humane disposition, very friendly and obliging to his relations and acquaintance, and extremely regular in his manners and conduct: he died aged about 30, in the 62d year of our Lord, which was the 8th of Nero's reign.

The satires he has left us abound with noble sentiments: His style is full of warmth, but so obscured by far fetched allegories, frequent ellipses, and overstrained metaphors, that it greatly diminishes their merit. This made some-  
one say, that, since Persius would not be under-



stood, he would not understand him. *Si non vis intelligi, nec ego volo te intelligere* (a).

Tho' he has endeavoured to imitate Horace as much as possible, yet his humour is of a very different kind: he is stronger and fuller of vivacity, but then he has less of grace. These two qualities almost always take from each other.

He thus speaks to a young man who had been brought up too delicately (b): "Wretch that thou art, and likely to be still more wretched! Is it come to this! Why don't you expect to be fondled like a lapdog, or a fine lady's favorite bird? Prythee eat pap and spoonmeat again, grow cross and pettish, and quarrel with thy nurse, and refuse the lullaby!

"But

(a) Our countryman Barton Holyday, who translated both Juvenal and Persius, has made this distinction between them, which is no less true than witty: That, in Persius, the difficulty is to find a meaning; in Juvenal, to chuse a meaning: so crabbed is Persius, so copious is Juvenal. The satires of Persius have been lately translated into English Prose, by Mr. Edmund Burton, a barrister at law. This performance is chiefly valuable on account of the large body of notes subjoined to the translation; in which he has been at no small pains in collecting, from the best authorities, such customs as respect any particular passage of his author; and him, with great modesty, offered several ingenious conjectures, which seem to be intirely new, for the illustration of obscure passages.

Ex. Sat. III.

(b) O miser! inque dies ultra miser. Hucine rerum  
Venimus! at cur non potius, teneroque columbo  
similis regum pueris, pappare minutum  
porcis, & iratus mammae lallare recusas?

" But can any one write, say you, with such  
 " a pen as I have got? Whom do you think to  
 " impose upon? Whither do all these frivolous  
 " excuses tend? You are only deceiving yourself  
 " all this while, by letting precious time waste  
 " away in negligence and sloth. Alas! the ill-  
 " baked vessel gives an empty sound, and disco-  
 " vers the secret flaw: thy moist clay is as yet  
 " pliant to command; now then prepare to take  
 " the mold, nor start reluctant from the sharp  
 " motions of the forming wheel.  
 " But am I not easy enough in my circum-  
 " stances? I have land, you know, and country-  
 " seats, and rich moveables in plenty, what occa-  
 " sion then for plaguing one's self with learning?  
 " I shall never want, thank Heaven, and have  
 " always

H 2

An tali studeam calamo? Cui verba? quid istas

Succinis ambages? tibi luditur; effluvis amens\*:

Contemnere: sonat vitium percussa, maligne

Respondet viridi non cocta fidelia † limbo.

Udum & molle lutum es, nunc nunc properandus & acri

Fingendus sine fine rota ‡. Sed rure paterao

\* *Effluvis amens.*] You sink into effeminacy; you are losing your-  
self in it by little and little, like wax melting before the fire.

† *Fidelia*] is a noun substantive in this place.

‡ *Fingendus sine fine rota.*] This is a figurative way of speaking,  
taken from the manner of making earthen vessels: where, while  
the lump of earth is upon the wheel, the potter is obliged to keep  
continually turning, and not suffer the wheel to stop till he has given  
it the size and shape he intends it to be of: for, if a vessel was to be  
made at two different times, the stuff would be apt to grow dry, and,  
in that case, the vessel would not be near so neat or handsome.

“always something to spare for my household  
“gods(a).

“And so you are contented with this, are  
“you? But what great cause of pride is there,  
“pray now, in being the thousandth in a direct  
“line from some old Tuscan stock, or in calling  
“a censor cousin? — Go, make a parade of your  
“trumpery to the gaping mob; as for me, I know  
“you to the bottom; do you not blush to live so  
“like a beast? But it is in vain speaking, his  
“heart is fattened in vice, he is insensible of his  
“loss; and, plunged in dissoluteness, down he  
“goes, hopeless of ever appearing again above  
“the surface.

“Great”

*Est tibi far medicum, purum & sine labe salinum.*

*Quid metuas! cultrixque foci secura patella est.*

*Hoc satis? An deceat pulmonem rumpere ventis,*

*Stemmata quod Tusco ramum millesime \* ducis,*

*Censoremve tuum vel quod trabeate salutas?*

*Ad populum phaleras †. Ego te intus, & in cute novi.*

*Non pudet ad mortem discincti vivere Nattæ?*

*Sed stupet hic vitio, & fibris increvit opimum*

*Pingue, caret culpa: nescit quid perdat, & alto*

*Demersus summa rursus non bullit in unda.*

\* *Millesime.* ] This is a vocative for a nominative.

† *Phalææ.* ] The word signifies trappings for horses; they were likewise a sort of ornament worn by the Roman gentlemen and men of arms. See Livy, l. xxii. c. 2. It is put here by way of metaphor for any shew or parade that is intended to dazzle the eyes of the unthinking crowd.

(a) It was customary, before they began to eat themselves, to cut off some part of the meat, which was first put into a pan or little dish, then thrown into the fire, as an offering to the household gods. This they called a *libation*, from *libare*, to taste, Cic. de Har. Resp. 10.

Magne



“Great Father of the Gods, when thou  
 “wouldst punish some tyrant king, the terror of  
 “his age; then, when his bloody rage boils  
 “highest, set fair virtue in his sight, but at a  
 “distance, that he may go mad with knowing  
 “the felicity he has lost. The tortures of the bra-  
 “zen bull (*a*) are but emblems of those he would  
 “feel, and the cries less piteous than those torn  
 “from his agonizing soul; yet these are nothing  
 “to his continual fears; not half such terrors  
 “filled the heart of the base parasite (*b*), when,  
 “from the gilded roof, he saw the pendant sword  
 H 3 “ready

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Magne pater divūm, sævos punire tyrannos  
 Haud aliâ ratione velis, cū dira libido  
 Moverit ingenium ferventi tincta veneno :  
 Virtutem videant, intabescantque reliq̃s

---

Anne magis Siculj gemuerunt æra juveni,  
 Et magis auratis pendens laquearibus ensis

(*a*) The bull of Phalaris, king of Agrigentum, a city of Sicily; a most cruel tyrant. One Perillus, a great artist, thinking to flatter his cruel disposition, invented an engine of brass in the shape of a bull, which being made hot, men were put into it alive; and the cries of these miserable wretches, issuing from its mouth, made a noise like the roaring of a bull. But the inventor made the first essay of his cursed device; for Phalaris ordered him to be shut up in it, saying, it was but just, that the artist should first try his own work. The tyrant himself was not long before he had his turn: for his people, grown weary of his repeated cruelties, rose against him, and made him experience a part of the miseries he had inflicted on them. Plin. xxiv. 8. Cic. Verr. iv. 33.

(*b*) Damocles, a servile flatterer of Dionysius, tyrant of Sicily, who took the following method to convince him, that the condition of kings was not such a happiness as many imagined. He caused



“ ready to drop its point upon his head bound  
 “ with mock royalty. He starts, he cries, Have  
 “ mercy ! I fall ! I fall ! deep down a horrid  
 “ precipice ! seized with a conscious dread that he  
 “ dares not communicate, even to the wife of his  
 “ bosom.”

The following extract, from his 5th satire, is still more philosophical. Here our author excellently treats that paradox of the Stoics, which affirms, that the wife or virtuous man is the only free, and that all vicious men are naturally slaves to their passions (a).

“ Yes, we should be free ; It is the first delight  
 “ of human kind : but not that freedom that every  
 “ bondman has of his master, to entitle him to  
 “ enroll his name in one of the tribes, or re-  
 “ ceive

---

*Purpurea subter cervicem terruit ? Imus,  
 Imus precipites, quam si tibi dicat, & infus  
 Palleat infelix, quod proxima nesciat uxor ?*

him to be dressed in his own robes, had the diadem placed upon his head, and seated him at a table magnificently served ; but, at the same time, ordered a sword, with the point downwards, to be suspended by a very slender thread, directly over his head ; by which he gave him to understand, that the ease, enjoyed by those of a middling station, far surpassed all the boasted happiness of a dignity surrounded by continual dangers. *Cic. Tusc. v. 34.*

*Ex, Sat. V.*

(a) *Libertate opus est : non hac, ut quisque Velina \**

\* *Velina.*] This the name of one of the tribes. When a slave was made free, it was customary to incorporate him in one of the tribes, into which the people of Rome were divided : each person had his own proper tribe.

Publius

receive the wretched dole of a little dirty measure  
 of corn. Fond madman! dost thou think that  
 turning round upon the heel will make a Ro-  
 man (a)? But what is this same liberty, say  
 you? Is it not to live as one will? Why I do  
 so, and therefore am as free as ever Brutus was.  
 Hold! says the Stoic, your consequence is  
 false. It is not in the power of the prætor to  
 bestow true freedom, nor make a fool conduct  
 himself, thro' the nicer circumstances of life, in  
 a becoming manner, and to make the best use  
 of them. But tell me, friend, dost thou know  
 how to moderate thy desires? Canst thou con-  
 tent thyself with a little? Dost thou know  
 when

Publius æmerin, scabiosum tesseraulâ \* far  
 Possidet. Hæc steriles veri, quibus una Quiritum  
 Vertigo facit. . . . .  
 An quisquam est alius liber, nisi ducere vitam  
 Cui licet, ut voluit? licet, ut volo, vivere: non sum  
 Liberior Bruto? Mendosè colligis, inquit  
 Stoicus hic, aurem mordaci lotus aceto,  
 Non prætoris erat sultis dere trovia rostrum  
 Officia, atque usum rapidè permissum vitam  
 Es medicus: votis præso dare, dulcis amicus.

\* *Tesseraulâ*. It was customary to make distributions of corn a-  
 mong the populace, when every one received a kind of note or ticket, *called tesseraulâ*, from the chief of his tribe; this was a mark of his  
 being a citizen.

(a) This was one of the ways of making their slaves free. Some-  
 times it was done by a gentle tap on the head, and then it was called  
*manumissio*; sometimes by giving them a stroke with a small stick or  
 wand, called in Latin *vindicta*.

" when to open and when to shut thy granaries,  
 " and look on wealth with undesiring eyes? Can'st  
 " thou step over a piece of money in thy way,  
 " without stooping to pick it up? If thou can'st  
 " truly call these virtues thine, thou art wise and  
 " and free, I'll allow; thanks to Heaven and the  
 " prætor. But if thou, who wast but very lately  
 " no better than one of the wicked like ourselves,  
 " if thou, I say, dost still retain the same ill ha-  
 " bits and follies, and hast only glossed them  
 " over with a sanctified air, then I shall resume  
 " the freedom I allowed you, and declare thee  
 " still a slave, and bound in the worst shackles,  
 " those of vice. Dost thou think  
 " thou hast no master but him that set thee free;  
 " no lord but him who was wont call out to thee  
 " with a harsh voice, *Here, Crispin, carry my*  
 " *slippers to the bath*: how the rascal creeps!  
 " *Quick sirrah, quick!* Hard usage this.

But

---

Jam nunc astringas, jam nunc granaria laxes;  
 Inque luto fixum possis transcendere nummum?  
 Nec glutto sorbere salivam Mercenariam?  
 Hæc mea sunt, teneo, cum vera dixeris, esto  
 Liberque ac sapiens, prætoribus ac Jove dextro.  
 Sin tu cum fueris nostræ paulo ante fæminæ,  
 Pelliculam veterem retines & frons politus  
 Astutam vapidò servas sub pectore vulpem;  
 Quæ dederam supra repeto, funemque reduco.  
 An dominum ignoras, nisi quem vindicta relaxat?  
 I puer, & frigillas Crispini ad balnea defer.  
 Si increpuit, Cæsar nugator? servitium acre.

To



"But should your former master pretend to  
 "command you now, or threaten you with the  
 "whip or the gallows, you would not mind him,  
 "and so for that reason you are free? No, no;  
 "for, while thy passions lord it in thy breast, thou  
 "art as much a slave as when you carried the  
 "slippers, and ran like a greyhound for fear of  
 "the whip. When you are inclined to take a  
 "lazy morning's nap, comes Avarice, and bids  
 "thee rise; thou snorest again: Up! up! . . . I can-  
 "not yet! . . . Up then, I say, . . . the tyrant Lucre  
 "will take no denial, and what's to be done! why  
 "obey thy lord's commands, rise and get aboard;  
 "travel to Pontus to fetch home fish, flax, castor,  
 "Coan wines: make the most of the mar-  
 "kets; sweat and toil to turn the penny; lye  
 "and swear. . . But Jove will know it. . .  
 "What a fool! a tradesman and trouble his  
 "head about heaven! But see, the slaves are

H 5

"packing

Te nihil impellit, nec quicquam extrinsecus intrat  
 Quod nervos agiter; sed si intus, & jecore agros  
 Nascantur domini, qui tu impunitior exis,  
 Atque hic, quem ad strigiles scutica & metus egit herilis?  
 Mane piger stertis: surge, inquit avaritia: eja.  
 Surge: negas: instat; surge inquit. Non queo: surge,  
 Et quid agam? rogitas? saperdas advehe Ponto,  
 Castoreum, stupas, hebenum, thus, lubrica Coa:  
 Tolle recens, primus piper è sitiente camelo,  
 Verte aliquid, jara. Sed Jupiter audiet: chen!  
 Varo, regustatum digito terebrare salinum  
 Contentus perages, si vivere cum Jove tendis.

(a) Every one knows how Boileau has imitated this in one of his fatires, Jam



" packing up thy baggage, the wines are already  
 " on board, nothing retards your voyage, why do  
 " you not fet sail? Thy other sovereign, Volup-  
 " tuousness, forbids. Where is this madman go-  
 " ing? Art out of thy senses? Ay, ay, the fel-  
 " low's brain is certainly turned, all the helli-  
 " bore of the shops will never recover him! Pray  
 " what carries you on shipboard? To wear a  
 " stinking tarpaulin, keep company with a parcel  
 " of drunken, lousy seamen, drink damnable  
 " wine out of a stinking skin, which smells of  
 " pitch and tar enough to suffocate one? Would  
 " you endure all this to raise your stock from five  
 " per cent to ten? Go to, friend! believe me you  
 " had better indulge yourself, and make the most  
 " of your time. Not to live at one's ease is not  
 " to live at all: Who knows, but to-morrow  
 " you may be dust and ashes, and as much for-  
 " gotten as if such an one had never lived? Death  
 " treads

---

Jam pueris pellem succinctus & cenophorum aptas  
 Ocyus ad navem: nil obstat, quia trabe vasta  
 Aegoum rapias, nisi solers luxuria ante  
 Seductum moneat: Quo deinde insane ruis? quo?  
 Quid tibi vis? calido sub pectore maseula bilis  
 Intemuit, quam non extinxerit urna cicutæ.  
 'Tun' mare transilias? tibi torta cannabe fulto,  
 Cæna sit in transtro, Vejetanumque rubellum  
 Exhalet vapida læsum pice sessilis obba?  
 Quid petis? ut nummi, quos hic quincunce modesto  
 Nutrieras, pergant avidos sudare deunces?  
 Indulge genio, carpamus duleia, nostrum est  
 Quod vivis: cinis & manes & fabula fiet:

Vive

"treads close upon thy heels! think of that, and  
 "how time flies. The moments that we now  
 "waste in talk are gone, to return no more.  
 "Speak! which wilt thou chuse, Avarice or  
 "Pleasure, for thy lord? Take one or the other;  
 "they are both to have the mastery of thee by  
 "turns; so chuse which of them you will obey  
 "first."

We have omitted some lines in this quotation, on account of the number of allusions, metaphors, and minute circumstances, which would have appeared dry and tedious in the translation. By the sample here given of this poet, the reader will perceive, that he is of a very grave and serious disposition: he is even melancholic; but whether it be from his zeal for virtue, or from a natural vigor in his character, his philosophy seems to have somewhat of sharpness and animosity in it against those it attacks.

## JUVENAL

Persius has been generally allowed to have more vigour than Horace; but, in comparison of:

---

Vive memor leti: fugit hora: hoc quod loquor inde est.

En quid agis? duplici in diversum scinderis hamo:

Hunc cine, an hunc sequeris? subeas alternus oportet:

Ancipiti obsequio dominos, alterius oborere,

Juvenal,

Juvenal, he is almost cold and lifeless. This poet is all metaphor: the hyperbole is his favorite figure. He was endowed with an extraordinary genius, and such a quantity of gall, as might have alone sufficed to make him a poet. He was born at Aquinum, in the kingdom of Naples. He passed the first part of his life in the exercises of the schools, particularly in composing declamations. Encouraged by the success of some verses, in which he had attacked the comedian Paris, he began to think himself cut out for satire: accordingly he gave himself up intirely to it, and performed his part so well therein, that he at last obtained the command of a body of troops, and, under the appearance of favour, was banished to the very extremity of Egypt, where they were then encamped. Here he had all the time and leisure he could desire to inveigh against the injustice of Fortune, and the base use the great make of power. Julius Scaliger, who is always singular in his sentiments, calls him the prince of poets: and, in his judgment, he far excels Horace, on account of his superior force: *ardet, inflat, jugulat*.

His first setting out sufficiently bespeaks the spirit and character of the man (*a*).

“What, must I always hear, and never make  
“a reply? Must I be for ever tormented with  
“hoarse

---

Ex. Sat. I.

(a) *Semper ego auditor tantum & nunquamne reponam?  
Vexatus toties rauci Theside Codri?*

Impune



“hoarse Codrus’s stunning repetitions of his The-  
 “said (a)? Must one fellow plague me with his  
 “insipid comedies (b), and another with his  
 “whining tragedies, and all this with impunity?  
 “Can I bear to have a whole summer’s day mur-  
 “dered by huge Telephus (c), or bulky Orestes’s  
 “(d) everlasting rage? No, it cannot be borne;  
 “we are no longer schoolboys, to stand in awe  
 “of the rod and ferula. To work, then, my  
 “pen; ’tis a folly, while we meet with such  
 “crouds of poets, to spare that paper they would  
 “be sure to destroy.” What

---

Impune ergo mihi recitaverit ille togatas,  
 Hic elegos? impune diem consumpserit ingena  
 Telephus? aut summi plena jam margine libri  
 Scriptus, & in tergo, nec dum finitus Orestes?  
 Et nos ergo manum ferulae subduximus.  
 Stulta est clementia, cum tot ubique  
 Vatibus occurras, perituræ parere chartæ.

(a) This was a poem of which Theseus was the hero; it was composed by one Codrus, an obscure and wretched poet, who used to go about repeating it till he was quite hoarse. It was customary in Rome, at that time, for people of condition to lend their houses to poets to rehearse their works in, on which occasion, there was generally a numerous assembly.

(b) *Inspid comedies and whining tragedies.* Every translation of satire should be, itself, satirical, by giving a satirical turn to the words and phrases. Juvenal makes use only of two words, *Togatas* and *Elegos*. The first signifying the Roman comedies, the latter, simply an elegy. But, had these comedies or elegies been good in their kinds, Juvenal would not, certainly, have been so much displeased at them as he appears to be. On this consideration, we have, in our translation, kept to the spirit, rather than to the letter.

(c) Telephus was king of Myfia, and son to Hercules and Auge. He was likewise the subject of a tragedy.

(d) Orestes was the son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra. He slew



What determines Juvenal to embrace the satyric vein, is not only the number of bad poets of his time, tho' that might pass for a very sufficient reason; but he takes up arms, on account of the excess to which the vices of his age are carried. A shocking irregularity prevails thro' all conditions of people. They game away their fortunes, they rob, they plunder one another. One ruins himself in fine cloaths, another by building, another by the luxury of his table; some kill themselves by their own debauches, others stab or poison one another. In short, wickedness and villainy are the only things recompensed: they reign in triumph, while virtue, oppressed and persecuted, hangs her head, and mourns in secret.

"Would you rise to honours and preferments,  
"be villainously bold, and dare do actions that  
"merit the gallows, or banishment. Virtue,  
"now a-days, is praised, and left to starve. Our  
"present great men owe their riches to the  
"enormity of their crimes; this builds them palaces,

---

Aude aliquid brevibus Gyaris \* & carcere dignum,  
Si vis esse aliquis, Probitas laudatur & alget;  
Criminibus debent hortos, prætoris, menus,  
flew his mother, to revenge the death of his father, to which she had been accessory. His story has furnished subject for more tragedies than any whatever: *Scenis agitatus Orestes, Vire*.

\* Gyaris] A small island, or, rather rock, in the Egean sea.

Argentum

“laces, this loads the groaning side-board with  
 “massy plate, this plants their gardens, carves  
 “their statues, and hangs the spacious gallery  
 “with pictures of immense price. . . . In short,  
 “no age ever bore so large a crop of vices; I de-  
 “fy posterity to match us, or add any thing to  
 “the present crimes. Satire may now spread its  
 “sails, and take all the winds that blow.

(a) “Hell and its ghosts, the Stygian lake full  
 “of black frogs, and Charon wafting over thou-  
 “sands of souls in a leaky boat; are now thought  
 “fables to fright fools with, and what none but  
 “children believe; but you may safely believe them.  
 “For what can we suppose the shades of Curius (b),  
 “the

Argentum vetus, & stantem extra pocula caprum) . . .

Nil erit ulterius quod nostris moribus addat

Posteritas: eadem cupient, facientque minores.

Omne in præcipiti vitium stetit. Utens velis:

Totos pande sinus.

(c) Esse aliquos Manes, & subterraneas reges,

Et contum & Stygio rivas in gurgite nigras,

Atque una transire vadum tot millia cymbe,

Nec pueri credunt, nisi qui nondum ære lavantur;

Sed tu vera pura. Curius quid sentit, & ambo.

(b) Curius, surnamed *Dentatus*, a noble Roman; the same who triumphed over the Samnites, Sabines, and Lucanians, and drove Pyrrhus out of Italy; and who, when the ambassadors of the Samnites brought him a large sum of money, as he was sitting by the fire boiling some herbs, refused it, with this memorable saying, that he had rather rule over rich men, than be rich himself.

CLXXX. 4. Conf. Hor. 4. 12.

Scipio?

“ the two Scipio’s (*a*) and Fabricius (*b*) think,  
 “ what the great Camillus, the Cremeran le-  
 “ gion (*c*), and those noble youths who bravely  
 “ fell in Cannæ’s (*d*) fatal day; what, I say, can  
 “ we suppose those illustrious warriors to think,  
 “ when they see souls descending from their once  
 “ loved, once virtuous Rome, all foul, and with  
 “ the blackest crimes? Will they not call out for  
 “ fire and sulphur to purify themselves (*e*)?”

Even those who carry the outward appearance of virtue, are not free from the corruption of the times: their plaistered faces, sanctified air, and philosophical discourses, impose only upon fools, and people ignorant of the world.

(*a*) “ I

Scipiadae? quid Fabricius; Manesque Camilli?

Quid Cremeræ legio, & Cannis consumpta juvenus,  
 Tot bellorum animæ, quoties hinc talis ad illos  
 Umbra venit? cuperent lustrari, si qua darentur  
 Sulfura cum tædis, & si foret humida laurus.

(*a*) The two Scipio’s, called by Virgil, *duo fulmina belli*; these were Publ. Cornelius Scipio, who overcame Hannibal, and was surnamed Africanus; and Lucius Cornelius Scipio, who defeated Antiochus, king of Syria, and was named Asiaticus. Liv.

(*b*) Fabricius and Camillus, two Roman generals, famous for their integrity and frugality.

(*c*) This legion, which was cut to pieces near the river Cremera, in Tuscany, was composed of 300 young noblemen, all of one family, and of the name of Fabius. They undertook to carry on the war, alone, against the Veientes. Liv. ii. 49.

(*d*) Cannæ, was a pitiful village in the kingdom of Naples, made famous by the overthrow Hannibal gave the Romans there, who lost upwards of 40,000 men. Liv. xxii. 47.

(*e*) This was the method of purifying themselves after having contracted any uncleanness. Liv. xxi.

Ultra



(a) "I am ready to die with vexation, when I hear these fellows pretend to moralize; I wish myself under the north pole. One would imagine, by their outside of temperance, every one to be a Curius, and they are, in fact, all Bacchanalians, in their debauched and disorder'd way of living. In the first place, they are, to a man, profoundly ignorant; their shelves are loaded with books, and their studies stuck full of bustoes and bronze's. He is the most learned, who has the finest Aristotle, or the best Cleanthes, over his chimney-piece. So never trust to outside."

These passages are every one full of an extreme vivacity; the poet perfectly in a fury. He is the same throughout; and, if he smiles sometimes, it is with a smile of insult and cruelty. In the fourth satire, we meet with the most cutting strokes and bitter invectives imaginable. In this he attacks the emperor Domitian, and to make sure of his mark, and reach him by degrees, he begins with one of his chief favorites, named Crispinus, who, from a slave, was raised to the rank of a Roman knight. And thus he sets out:

(a) "Once

¶ Ultra Sauromatar fugere hinc libet, & glaciale

Oceanum, quoties aliquid de moribus audent

Qui Curius simulant, & Bacchanalia vivunt.

Indocti primum: quanquam plena omnia gypso

Chrysippi inventas. Nam perfectissimos horum est,

Si quis Aristotelem similem, vel Pittacon emm,

Et jubet archetypos plateam servare Cleanthes.

Fronti nulla fides. . . .

Ecce



1 "Once more Crispinus makes his appearance :  
 "a monster that has not one single virtue to re-  
 "deem his vices : worn out and feeble with  
 "debauchery, he has nothing but the fire of lust  
 "left to warm him. What then avail the  
 "stately porticoes, under which his tired mules  
 "draw their worthless burthen? What the long  
 "and thickening shade, that shields him from  
 "the sultry sun ; or how many acres of the  
 "public place he can call his own ; or what are  
 "the number of his palaces ? No bad man what-  
 "ever can be happy, much less an infamous  
 "corrupter of chastity ; an incestuous brute,  
 "that

This is no more the gentle satire of Horace,  
 that tickles while it reprehends ; nor that of Per-  
 sius, which gravely argues us out of our follies ;  
 but satire armed with a sword, and frantic with  
 rage. The detail he makes of Crispinus's wealth,  
 is only to show what an extravagant fortune he  
 possesses, and to render him the more odious by  
 it. A slave, who came to Rome with only a  
 rag

Once

(a)

Ex. Sat. IV.

(a) Ecce iterum Crispinus, & est mihi sepe vocandus

Ad partes, monstrum nulla virtute redemptum

A vitia : æges, solaque libidine fortis

Quid refert igitur quantis iumenta fatiget

Porticibus, quæstæ nemorum vestatur in umbra

Jugera quot vicina foro, quamcunque astra

Nemo malus felix. Minime corruptor, se idem

Incestus. . . . .

Sed

rag to cover him, and without a shoe to his foot, is now seen walking in all the public places, &c. But, stay, the poet is not going to discover his crimes yet; he will content himself, for this time, with a few trifling circumstances.

“But now of slighter faults; and yet, had any other done the same, they would have been punished by the Censor. But what every good man would count a disgrace, does honour to Crispinus. But what is to be said of a wretch, whose person is, if possible, more detestable than his crimes? It was but the other day, that the lavish slave gave six thousand sesterii (a) for a barbel; what a price for a single fish! Why, the fisherman himself might have been bought for less! One might purchase a noble estate, in the pleasantest part of Italy, for that money! But what think you then of the luxury of

---

*Sed nunc de factis levioribus : & tamen alter*

*Si facisset idem, caderet sub iudice morum.*

*Nam quod turpe bonis, Tizio, Sajoque decobat*

*Crispinum. Quid agas, cum dira, & foedior omni*

*Crimine persona est? Nullum sex millibus emit.*

*Hoc precium squammæ! potuit fortasse minoris*

*Piscator, quam piscis emi. Provincia tanti*

*Vendit agros: sed majores Apulia vendit.*

*Quales tunc epulas ipsum glutula putamus*

(a) The sesterius was a silver coin in use among the Romans. *Mille sesterti*, is equal, in English money, to 81. 2s. 5d. 1; so that the fish in question must have cost just six times as much, or 481. 8s. 9d. An enormous price, indeed, for a single fish, and that a small one!

“ of his master, the emperor (a), if one of his buffoons swallows so many sesterii at a meal ;  
 “ which yet would have made but a small side dish at the other’s table, when but indifferently served ?

“ Begin, Calliope ! goddess of Pindus, I invoke thy aid : but not to sing imaginary strains. All here is truth, plain, honest truth ; help then, chaste virgins of Pieria’s font, help me to recount the faithful narrative, in return for the pleasing title I have given you.”

This invocation is altogether satyrical, and gives us to understand, that it requires a more than common assistance to paint Domitian in his true colours.

[As it is almost impossible for a prose translation to preserve the spirit of the following part of this satire, which is, by far, the most lively and animated of the whole, and the fullest of poetical beauties,

Induperatorem ; cum tot sestertia, partem  
 Exiguam, & modicæ sumptam de margine cœnæ  
 Purpureus magni ructaret scurra Palati ?

Incipe, Calliope, licet hic considere : non est  
 Cantandum, res vera agitur : narrate, puellæ,  
 Pierides : pro sit mihi vos dixisse puellæ.

(a) Flavius Domitianus, the twelfth Cæsar, was the son of Vespasian, and brother to Titus, surnamed the delight of mankind, whom he succeeded in the empire ; he was the most cruel of any of his predecessors, being deliberately and refinedly so. He was murdered by one Stephanus, steward to his wife Domitilla, and some other officers of his court, as the only means to preserve their own lives. *Vid. vitam apud Sueton.*

Cum



beauties, the translator of this work has ventured to substitute Mr. Dryden's versification in the room of what the author has rendered into prose in the French; and hopes, that this liberty will meet with the indulgence, if not approbation of his readers.]

When he, with whom the *Flavian* race decay'd,  
The groaning world with iron sceptre sway'd,  
When a bald Nero reign'd and servile Rome obey'd;

The fisherman having made the best of his way to court; the folding doors fly open of themselves, to give him admittance; he approaches the royal presence, and thus makes his compliment:

Accept, dread sir, this tribute from the main,  
Too great for private kitchens to contain.  
To your glad genius sacrifice this day,  
Eet common meats respectfully give way.  
Haste to unload your stomachs (a) to receive  
This turbot, that for you did only live.  
So long preserv'd to be imperial food,  
Glad of the net, and to be taken proud.

How

---

Cum jam semianimum laceraret Flavius orbem  
Ultimus, & clavo ferviret Roma Neroni;

... Tunc Picens: Accipe, dixit,

Privatis majora focis, genialis agatur

Iste dies, propera stomachum laxare saginis,

Et tua servatum consume in secula rhombum.

Ipsè capi voluit. Quid apertius? & tamen illi

(a) To so great an excess was the gluttony and debauchery of those times carried, that they used to provoke vomiting, to empty their stomachs, and make themselves a keener appetite for the next meal, *rabidam facturus orexim*, and *vomunt ut edant, et edunt ut vomant*, says Seneca,

Surgebant



How fulsome this! how gross! yet this takes well,  
 And the vain prince with empty pride does swell.  
 Nothing so monstrous can be said or feign'd,  
 But with belief and joy is entertain'd,  
 When to his face the worthless wretch is prais'd,  
 Whom vile court-flatt'ry to a god has rais'd.

But, oh hard fate! the palace-stores no dish  
 Afford, capacious of the mighty fish.  
 To sage debate are summon'd all the peers,  
 His trusty and much hated counsellors.  
 In whose pale looks that ghastly terror sat,  
 That haunts the dangerous friendship of the great.  
 The loud *Liburnian* that the senate call'd,  
 Run, run; he's set, he's set, no sooner baul'd,  
 But, with his robe snatch'd up in haste, does come  
 Pegasus (a), bailiff of affrighted Rome.

What

Surgebant cristæ: nihil est, quod credere de se  
 Non possit, cum laudatur dis æqua potestas.

Sed deorat præcipitina mensura vocantur  
 Ergo in concilium procures, quos oderat ille,  
 In quorum facie miseræ magnæque sedebat  
 Pallor amicitia. Præmo, clamante Liburno\*,  
 Currite, jam sedit, rapta properabat abolla  
 Pegasus, attonitæ positus modo villicus urbi.

\* The Romans made their criers from the people of *Liburnia*, a part of *Illyricum*, on account of their loud voices. *Præm.*

(a) This was a citizen of *Alba*, a very learned lawyer, and præfect, or chief magistrate of *Rome*; which answers to our Lord mayor. He calls him here a bailiff; as if *Rome*, by *Domitian's* cruelty, had so far lost its liberty and privileges, that it was now no better than a country village, and fit to be governed by no better than a bailiff.

What more were perfects then? The best he was,  
And faithfullest expounder of the laws;  
Yet in ill times thought all things managed best,  
When justice exercis'd her sword the least.

Old Crispus next, pleasant, tho' old, appears;  
His wit nor humour yielding to his years:  
His temper mild, good nature join'd with sense,  
And manners charming as his eloquence.  
Who fits for a useful friend than he,  
To the great ruler of the earth and sea,  
If, as his thoughts were just, his tongue were free?  
If it were safe to vent his gen'rous mind  
To Rome's dire plague, and terror of mankind,  
If cruel pow'r could softning counsel bear,  
But what's so tender as a tyrant's ear?  
With whom whoever, tho' a fav'rite spake,  
At ev'ry sentence set his life at stake,  
Tho' the discourse were of no weightier things,  
Than sultry summers, or unhealthful springs;  
This well he knew, and therefore never try'd,  
With his weak arms, to stem the stronger tide.

Nor

An ne aliud tunc profecti? quorum optimus atque  
Interpres legum sanctissimus: omnia quanquam  
Temporibus divinis tractanda putabat inermi  
Justitiâ. Venit & Crispi jucunda senectus,  
Cujus erant mores qualis facundia, mite  
Ingenium. Marii, ne terras, populoque regenti  
Quis comes utilior, si clade, & peste sub illa  
Stevitium dominum. & honestum asserere liceret  
Consilium? sed quid violentius ante tyranni,  
Cui quoque si pluvius, aut mistibus, aut nimbosis  
Vere locutus sum pendebar amici?  
Ille igitur nunquam direxit brachia contra  
Torrentem: nec civis erat, qui libera posset

Verba

Nor did all Rome, grown spiritless, supply  
 A man that for bold truth durst bravely die,  
 So safe by wise complying silence, he  
 Ev'n in that court did fourscore summers see

Montanus' belly next, advancing slow,  
 Before the sweating senator did go

Crispinus after, but much sweeter, comes,  
 Scented with costly oils and eastern gums,  
 More than would serve two fun'ral perfumes.

Then Pompey, none more skill'd in the court game  
 Of cutting throats, with a soft whisper, came

Next Fuscus (a), he who many a peaceful day  
 For Dacian vultures was reserv'd a prey,  
 Till, having study'd war enough at home,  
 He led abroad th' unhappy arms of Rome.

Nor came Veiento, short; but as inspir'd  
 By thee, Bellona, by thy fury fir'd,  
 Turns prophet: see, the mighty omen, see,  
 He cries, of some illustrious victory!

Some

---

Verba animi proferre, & vitam impendere vero.

Montani quoque venter adest abdomine tardus;

Et matutino sudans Crispinus amomo,

Quantum vix redolent duo funera: seviror illo

Pompeius tenui jugulos aperire fufurro;

Et, qui vulturibus servabat viscera Dacis,

Fuscus, marmorea meditatus praelia villa.

Non cedit Veiento, sed ut fanaticus affro

Percussus, Bellona, tuo divinat: & ingens

Omen habes, inquit, magni clarique triumphi:

(a) Cornelius Fuscus, a nobleman who carried on the war against the Dacæ. This man had never seen an army in his life-time, nor had the least idea of the art of war: accordingly, the success was answerable to the capacity of the general, for his army was defeated, and himself slain. *Sueton in, Vit Domit,*

Regem



Some captive king, thee his new lord shall own :  
 Or, from his British chariot headlong thrown,  
 The proud Arviragus (a) come tumbling down !  
 The monster's foreign. Mark the pointed spears  
 That from thy hand on his pierc'd back he wears !  
 Who nobler could; or plainer things presage !  
 Yet one thing 'scap'd him, the prophetic rage  
 Shew'd not the turbot's country, nor its age.

At length, by Cæsar, the grand question's put :  
 My lords, your judgment; shall the fish be cut ?  
 Far be it, far from us ! Montanus cries;  
 Let's not dishonour thus the noble priz'd  
 A pot of finest earth, thin, deep, and wide,  
 Some skilful quick Prometheus (b) must provide.  
 Clay and the forming wheel prepare with speed.  
 But, Cæsar, be it from henceforth decreed,  
 That potters on the royal progress wait,  
 T' assist in these emergencies of state.

This counsel pleas'd ; nor could it fail to take,  
 So fit, so worthy of the man that spake.

Vol. III. Part II.

I

They

---

Regem aliquem capies : aut de temone Britanno  
 Excidet Arviragus : peregrina est bellua, cernis  
 Erectas in terga fudes ? hoc desuit unum  
 Fabricio, patri um ut rhombi memoraret ætatis  
 Quidnam igitur censes ? conciditur ? absit ab illo  
 Dedecus hoc, Montanus ait : testa alia paretur,  
 Quæ tenui muro spatiosum colligat orbem.  
 Debetur magnus patinæ subitusque Prometheus.  
 Argillam, atque rotam citius properate : sed ex hoc  
 Tempore jam, Cæsar, figuli tua castra sequantur.  
 Vicit digna viro sententia. . . .

(a) One of the kings of Britain.

(b) This is he whom poets feign to have formed men of clay, and put life into them by fire stole from heaven. This is a synecdoche, and means no more than a skilful potter.

Surgitur,



They rise, and straight, all with respectful awe,  
 At the word giv'n, obsequiously withdraw.  
 Whom, full of eager haste, surprize, and fear,  
 Our mighty prince had summon'd to appear ;  
 As if some news he'd of the Catti tell,  
 Or that the fierce Sicambrians did rebel :  
 As if Expresses from all parts had come  
 With fresh alarms, threatening the fate of Rome.

What folly this ! but oh ! that all the rest  
 Of his dire reign had thus been spent in jest !  
 And all that time such trifles had employ'd  
 In which so many nobles he destroy'd !  
 He safe, they unreveng'd, to the disgrace  
 Of the surviving, tame, patrician race !  
 But when he dreadful to the rabble grew,  
 Him, whom so many lords had slain, they flew.

---

*Surgitur, & misso procures exire jubentur  
 Concilio, quos Albanam dux magnus in arcem  
 Traxerat attonitos, & festinare coactos,  
 Tanquam de Catti\* aliquid, torvisque Sicambriis  
 Dicturus: tanquam diversis partibus orbis  
 Anxia præcipiti venisset epistola pinna.  
 Atque utinam his potius nugis tota ille dedisset  
 Tempora sævitæ, claras quibus abstulit urbi  
 Illustresque animas impune, & vindica nulle ?  
 Sed perit ; postquam cerdonibus esse timendus  
 Cœperat : hoc nocuit Lamiarum † cæde madenti,*

\* The Catti, or Gætz, were Scythians inhabiting the northern coasts of the Black Sea. The Sicambrians were a people of that part of Germany now called Westphalia, and the county of Gueldres.

† *Lamiarum.*] A part for the whole. After having destroyed most of the principal families in Rome, without any one having the courage to make head against him, he turned his cruelties upon those of less distinction, and here he met his ruin.

In this extract we have all the force, bitterness, and acrimony of satire. This manner prevails thro' the whole of this author. He is not satisfied with painting, he engraves deeply, and even brands with an hot iron.

That part of his tenth satire where he breaks in pieces the statue of Sejanus (*a*), is one of his finest passages. Herallies, in the bitterest manner, the ambition of that minister, and the folly of the Roman people, who only judge by appearances. He undertakes to prove, in this satire, that men are mad in their wishes and pursuits; and that they are very often ruined by success. After a number of examples in support of this assertion, he comes to that of Sejanus, who met with his destruction in the very circumstance of his elevation. (*b*)

Some ask for envy'd pow'r; which public hate  
Pursues, and hurries headlong to their fate:  
Down go the titles; and the statue crown'd  
Is, by base hands, in the next river drown'd.

I 2

The

---

(*a*) Minister to the emperor Tiberius, who, intending to dethrone his master and reign in his stead, had his design betrayed, and was punished for his treachery.

Ex. Sat. 10.

(*b*) Quosdam præcipitat subjecta potentia magnæ  
Invidiæ: mergit longa atque insignis honorum  
Pagina: descendunt statuae; restemque sequuntur.

Ipsas

The guiltless horses (*a*) and the chariot wheel  
 The same effects of vulgar fury feel :  
 The smith prepares his hammer for the stroke,  
 While the lung'd bellows hissing fire provoke;  
 Sejanus, almost first of Roman names,  
 The great Sejanus crackles in the flames :

Form'd in the forge, the pliant brass is laid  
 On anvils; and of head (*b*) and limbs are made,  
 Pans, cans, and pispots, a whole kitchen trade.

Adorn your doors with laurels; and a bull,  
 Milk-white, and large, lead to the capitol;  
 Sejanus, with a rope, is dragg'd along;  
 The sport and laughter of the giddy throng!  
 Good lord! they cry, what Ethiop lips he has,  
 How foul a snout, and what a hanging face!  
 By Heav'n, I never could endure his sight;  
 But say, how came his monstrous crimes to light?

What

---

*Ipsas deinde rotas bigarum impacta securis  
 Credit, & immeritis franguntur crura caballis.  
 Jam ferident ignes, jam solibus atque caminis  
 Ardet adoratum populo caput, & crepat ingena  
 Sejanus: deinde ex facie toto orbe secunda  
 Fiunt urceoli, pelves, fartago, patellæ.  
 Pone domi lauros, duc in capitolia magnum  
 Cretatumque bovem, Sejanus ducitur unco  
 Spectandus. Gaudent omnes. Quæ labra! quis illi  
 Vultus erat! nunquam (si quid mihi credis) amavi  
 Hunc hominem. Sed quo cecidit sub crimine? quisnam*

(*a*) The triumphal chariot and horses, here spoken of, were in figures of marble, or bronze, round his statue.

(*b*) This part of him is named preferable to any other, to render the opposition more sensible: that face which was so lately the object of every one's adoration, is now turned into saucepans, plates, and the vilest utensils; an alarming instance of precarious greatness!

Delator?

What is the charge, and who the evidence  
 (The favour of the nation, and the prince ?)  
 Nothing of this ; but our old Cæsar sent  
 A noisy letter to his parliament :  
 Nay, Sirs, if Cæsar writ, I ask no more,  
 He's guilty, and the question's out of door.  
 How goes the mob ? (for that's a mighty thing.)  
 When the king's trump, the mob are for the king :  
 They follow fortune, and the common cry  
 Is still against the rogue condemn'd to die.

## Of the FRENCH SATYRISTS.

## REGNIER.

**M**ATHURIN Regnier, a native of Char-  
 tres, and nephew to the famous Abbot  
 Desportes, a poet of the sixteenth century, was  
 the first who published satires in France. Such  
 of his pieces as he has finished with care, are of  
 a very delicate and easy turn, and the verse is  
 smooth and natural ; so far, therefore, he might  
 be said to have merit.

---

*Dalator ? quibus indicis ? quo teste probavit ?*

*Nil horum. Verbosa & grandis epistola venit*

*A Capreis : bene habet, nil plus interrogo : sed quid*

*Turba Remi ? sequitur fortunam, ut semper, & edit*

*Damnatos.*

\* Those who have a mind to see a parallel between these  
 three great Latin satyrists, may consult Mr. Dryden in his dedication  
 to his satires of Juvenal and Persius, p. 48.



*. . . Si du son bardi de ses rimes Cyniques  
Il n'allarmoit souvent les oreilles pudiques.*

Did not the Cynic looseness of his lays,  
Alarms to modest ears too often raise.

In extenuation of this fault, it may be al-  
leged, that, as he copied intirely after the mo-  
dels of the Latin satyrists, he thought himself  
obliged to follow them in every thing; and looked  
upon a freedom of expression, as one of the most  
necessary ingredients in his composition.

The following is his manner of relating a  
fable :

On dit que Jupiter Roi des Dieux & des hommes,  
Se promenant un jour en la terre où nous sommes,  
Reçut en amitié deux hommes apparens,  
Tous deux d'âges pareils, mais de mœurs différens.  
L'un avoit nom Minos, l'autre avoit nom Tantale.  
Il les élève au ciel, & d'abord leur étale  
Parmi les bons propos, les graces & les ris,  
Tout ce que la faveur depart aux favoris.  
Ils mangeoient a sa table, avaloient l'ambrosie,  
Et des plaisirs du ciel fauloient leur fantaisie.  
Ils étoient comme chefs de son conseil privé,  
Et rien n'étoit bien fait qu'ils n'eussent approuvé :  
Minos eut bon esprit, prudent, accord, & sage,  
Et fut jusqu'à la fin jouer son personnage.  
L'autre fut un langard, révélant les secrets  
Du ciel & de son maître aux hommes indiscrets.  
L'un avecque prudence au ciel s'impatronise,  
Et l'autre en fut chassé comme un peteux d'Eglise.

This

This little specimen may serve to shew the character of Regnier as a writer : his style is all along easy, flowing, natural, and vigorous ; but he does not always preserve a proper dignity in the words and thoughts, nor even in the things ; and is sometimes tedious and absurd. Where he copies his, imitation is in general so servile as to become a translation far short of the original.

## BOILEAU.

Nicholas Boileau Despreaux, who appeared sixty years after the aforementioned poet, was much more circumspect in his works, as knowing, that decency in writing is no less a virtue than decency of manners. His natural talent got the better of his education ; and tho' he was son, brother, uncle, cousin, and brother-in-law to those of the long robe, and that his parents had determined to bring him up to the bar, yet was he resolved to be a poet, and, what's more, a satirical poet. He gives us the following character of himself, in speaking to his book : (a)

Tell all mankind, whate'er my foes have said,  
I'm not so black at bottom as I'm made :

L 4

That

---

(a) Deposez hardiment qu'au fond cet homme horrible,  
Ce censeur qu'on a peint si noir & si terrible

Fut

That he who has for railing been revil'd,  
 Tho', in the main, plain, equitable, mild,  
 A friend to truth : nor did he ever write  
 With malice, or was spiteful out of spite :  
 That, in a word, his candor was his fault,  
 And the sincerity he liv'd he taught.  
 Say, tho' by wretched rhymers teaz'd, his pen,  
 Whene'er it lash'd the poets, spar'd the men.  
 True was his verse, but it was still discreet ;  
 And four as he may seem, his *look* was sweet.  
 In body weak, not short, nor yet too tall ;  
 Nor is he what the world voluptuous call :  
 Himself less virtuous than he's virtue's friend,  
 Yet will not *dare his frailties* to defend.

His verse is strong, exact, harmonious, and full, and the whole finished with the greatest care.

He has not all the simplicity and ease of Ragnier ; but then he has kept himself free from his faults. He is concise, distinct, and careful in all he writes, never admitting any thing useless, superfluous, or obscure. The plan of his satire

---

Eut un esprit doux, simple, ami de l'équité,  
 Qui cherchant dans ses vers la seule vérité,  
 Fit, sans être malin, ses plus grandes malices,  
 Et qu'enfin sa candeur seule a fait tous ses vices :  
 Dites que harcelé par les plus vils rimeurs,  
 Jamais, blessant leurs vers, il n'effleura leurs mœurs,  
 Libre dans ses discours, mais pourtant toujours sage,  
 Assez foible de corps, assez doux de visage,  
 Ni petit, ni trop grand, très-peu voluptueux,  
 Ami de la vertu, plutôt que des vertueux.

is to attack vice in general, and bad authors in particular. He never calls a villain by his name, but makes no scruple of naming a bad author who has offended him, as a warning to others, and in defence of the rights of understanding and good taste. This having been imputed to him as a fault by several persons, either thro' interest, scrupulousness, or littleness of mind; he calls himself to an account for it in his ninth satire, which he addresses to his genius, or muse, and disculpates himself in a manner as just as it is singular: He speaks to her in the following manner: (a)

What! must you still satyrically prate,  
And endless quarrels to yourself create?  
For ever some fresh murmuring must I hear?  
And are you still resolv'd not to forbear?  
Give me a reason why you'll still rail on,  
Or—'tis no joke,—faith, muse you must have done.

To which his muse makes reply: (b)

Is it to rail, to tell an empty sot,  
His trance will fail him, and his writings rot;

I 5

To

(a) Vous ferez-vous toujours des affaires nouvelles?  
Et faudra-t'il sans cesse essuyer des querelles?  
N'entendrais-je qu'Auteurs se plaindre & murmurer?  
Jusqu'à quand vos fureurs doivent-elles durer?  
Répondez, mon Esprit, ce n'est plus raillerie.  
Dites. . . .

(b) . . . Mais, direz-vous, pourquoi cette furie? . . .  
Quoi! pour un maigre auteur que je glose en passant,

Est-



To shew a poet, of his buyers proud,  
 That sound as well as sense will please the croud ;  
 That ev'ry vile translator's not a wit,  
 Nor ev'ry college priest for preaching fit :  
 If this, by your so sage reproof, you mean,  
 Then truth's impertinence, and reason spleen.

There is nothing in the original but what is applicable to reason and good sense in this answer, delivered with a becoming dignity and freedom : the expressions are all of them just and clear, often rich and bold ; and the turns easy and sprightly. There is nothing wanting, nothing superfluous. This is one of the distinguishing characters of this writer's elocution. He had the secret of making the wants of the poet pass for those of the subject. But to proceed :

Call it not railing, 'tis not so severe,  
 Railing now flatters and bespeaks you fair ;  
 As thus, were Alidor's story to be told,  
 It would not all at once his faults unfold ;

But

---

Est-ce un crime après tout, & si noir, & si grand ?  
 Et qui, voyant un fat s'applaudir d'un ouvrage,  
 Où la droite raison trébuché à chaque page,  
 Ne s'écrie aussi-tôt : L'impertinent Auteur !  
 L'ennuyeux Ecrivain ! le maudit Traducteur !  
 A quoi bon mettre au jour tous ces discours frivoles.  
 Et ces riens enfermés dans de grandes paroles ?

(a) Est-ce donc là médire, ou parler franchement ?  
 Non, non, la médisance y va plus doucement.  
 Si l'on vient à chercher pour quel secret mystère,  
 Alidor à ses fraix bâtit un monastère :

Alidor,

But cry, with fawning sneer and accent mild,  
 What, Alidor ! I knew him from a child :  
 He was the smartest lacky in the town ;  
 Well ! who'd have thought he'd ever wear the gown ?  
 But like a saint, to make his reck'ning even,  
 The wealth he stole from men he gave to heav'n.  
 Thus they defame with art, and, mild in note,  
 They compliment you, when they cut your throat.

What versifier can make his thought move in a more firm, vigorous, and yet easy manner ? He has, by malicious people, been sometimes styled the *laborious Despreaux* : but he laboured more to conceal the pains he was at in writing, than others now-a-days do to shew theirs.

A soul, above a mean compliance born,  
 To rally in so soft a tone would scorn.  
 With hobbling verse to quarrel, what offence ?  
 Or wrong to war with those who war with sense ?  
 To laugh at such as labour to delight  
 In vain, is ev'ry common reader's right.

---

Alidor, dit un fourbe, il est de mes amis ;  
 Je l'ai connu laquais, avant qu'il fut commis,  
 C'est un homme d'honneur, de piété profonde,  
 Et qui veut rendre à Dieu ce qu'il a pris au monde.  
 Voilà jouer d'adresse & médire avec art ;  
 Et c'est avec respect enfoncer le poignard,

(\*) Un esprit né sans fard, sans basse complaisance,  
 Fuit ce ton radouci que prend la médifance,  
 Mais de blâmer des vers ou durs ou languissans,  
 De choquer un auteur qui choque le bon sens,  
 De railler d'un plaisant qui ne fait pas nous plaire ;  
 C'est ce que tout lecteur eut toujours droit de faire.

One may even venture to say, that there is not a single verse in this poet, but has its movement and harmony, peculiarly adapted to the object it expresses. But this is more particularly sensible where the idea is musical, that is to say, will admit of being partly expressed by inarticulate sounds; which sort of expression he always joins with that of the words; in which respect, he greatly resembles Virgil and Homer.

The four original lines which begin with *Mais de blâmer*, produce an agreeable suspension: for in repeating them, we find the mind at first moderately exercised, after which, it meets with a pleasing repose in the following ones:

A fop of quality, with fine grimace,  
May sentence freely and uncensur'd pass:  
May, to our modern bards, prefer our old  
And *Tasse's* tinsel rhymes to Virgil's gold.

This line upon Tasso has been made a matter of great reproach to our poet. There is not a writer, from the garret to the cellar, but what has had a stroke at him, under pretence to revenging so celebrated a name. But our critic remained unalterable in his decision. A little while before his death, he was asked, whether he had not altered his opinion concerning that poet? "So far

---

(a) Tous les jours à la Cour un sot de qualité  
Peut jurer de travers avec impunité  
A Malherbe, à Racan, préférer Théophile,  
Et le clinquant du Tasse à tout l'or de Virgile.

"from it, replied he, that, upon reading him  
 "over lately, I was very sorry I had not ex-  
 "plained myself more at large upon this subject,  
 "in some of my reflexions upon Longinus. I  
 "should have began by acknowledging Tasso to  
 "have had a most sublime and extensive genius,  
 "and to have been born with the happiest talents  
 "for poetry, and the noblest kind of it: but  
 "then, when I had come to consider the use he  
 "has made of these talents, I should have de-  
 "monstrated, that he does not always excel in  
 "sound sense, being, in the greatest part of his  
 "narrations, more attached to the pleasing than the  
 "necessary; that his descriptions are almost al-  
 "ways loaded with superfluous ornaments; that  
 "when he is painting the stronger passions, and  
 "in the very midst of the concern and trouble  
 "they have excited, he runs off into fallies of  
 "of wit, which immediately destroy the pathetic;  
 "that he is full of florid images, forced turns,  
 "and trifling thoughts, which are so far from  
 "being suitable to a poem like the Jerusalem,  
 "that they would hardly be tolerable in his A-  
 "myntas. Now concluded Mr. Despreaux, if  
 "we compare this with the modesty, gravity,  
 "and majesty of Virgil, what else is it better  
 "than tinsel set in competition with gold?" *Hist.*  
*de l'Acad. Fr. Tom. II.* I am sensible that the  
 adorers of Tasso, have a number of things to say  
 in answer to this; but which will not hinder  
 Mr. Despreaux's judgment, a judgment founded



in maturity and reason, from having a superior weight; and what person now-a-days, with his senses about him, will venture to put his single judgment into the ballance against that of a man's such as Despreaux was?

Each lawyer's spruce clerk believes his eighteen pence

Entitles him to judge of wit and sense;

Will brave Othello in his fiercest rage,

And criticise on Shakespear's matchless page.

These lines in the original, and which I have I have adapted to our meridian, are most of them so beautiful, that they are become kind of proverbs. They seem rather born than made. What life and spirit are thrown on those four verses by the allegory of the lawyer's clerk going to try his manhood upon Attila, and damn every line that chanced to displease him? Is it possible to find any verses better hit off? The following are much the same: (b)

Nay, I have seen a poet's valet weigh,  
In clumsy scales, the merit of a play.

For

---

(a) Un Clerc, pour quinze sols, sans craindre le holo,

Peut aller au parterre attaquer Attila,

Et si le Roi des Huns ne lui charme l'oreille,

Traiter de Visigots tous les vers de Corneille.

(b) Il n'est valet d'auteur ni copiste à Paris,

Qui, la balance en main, ne pèse les écrits.

Dès

For he that in the scene his fortune tries,  
 Is still a slave to him that sees or buys :  
 To prejudice and humour he submits,  
 And stands the shock of fools as well as wits.  
 In vain an author, if his works displease,  
 Begs pardon in a preface on his knees :  
 The reader, like an angry judge, will use  
 His pow'r and not admit of an excuse.

Only compare a few such passages as these, and what we have already quoted, and shall continue to do as we go along, with some of those ridiculous poems we now and then meet with, where the thoughts seem to fly away, and hide themselves, and the mind is continually teased by a parcel of ingenious puerilities; and they will shew like gold beside tinsel. Our author reasons; he constantly pursues his subject: "A lawyer's clerk, and an author's footman, shall set up to be judges of writings."

And ev'ry one have leave to speak but I.  
 Give me a reason for't, and I'll comply :

My

Dès que l'impression fait éclore un Poète,  
 Il est esclave né de quiconque l'achète :  
 Il se soumet lui-même aux caprices d'autrui,  
 Et ses Ecrits tout seuls doivent parler pour lui.  
 Un Auteur à genoux dans une humble préface,  
 Au lecteur, qu'il ennuie, a beau demander grace,  
 Qui lui fait son procès de pleine autorité.  
 (a) Et je serai le seul qui ne pourrai rien dire ?  
 On sera ridicule, & je n'oserai rire ?

Et

My taste, like their's, till then shall be my rule,  
 I'll call a sot, a sot a fool a fool :  
 Besides, what harm has all this freedom done ?  
 Their talents but for me had ne'er been known :  
 Thro' me their fame the public ear has reach'd,  
 Or they unnotic'd might have wrote or preach'd,  
 Satire's of service to a rhiming sot,  
 His writings esse, his name would be forgot.  
 By this a coxcomb is illustrious made ;  
 As light on picture, is set off by shade :  
 In short, I speak my mind, whate'er I blame,  
 And those that may condemn me, think the same.

In the original verses we have the poet's flood  
 rolling in a full stream, but without once losing it-  
 self, or overbearing its shore, as often happens to  
 Regnier, in whom the ideas seem oftentimes to  
 beget one another, rather than to rise from the  
 subject itself; and hang together but by a very  
 loose chain, that gives his poetry greatly the  
 air of the lyric excursion; which should never  
 have a place in discourses destined to philosophy.

*Et qui sauroit sans moi, &c.*

Their talents but for me, &c.

---

Et qu'ont produit mes vers de si pernecieux,  
 Pour armer contre moi tant d'Auteur furieux ?  
 Loin de les décrier, je les ai fait paroître ;  
 Et souvent, sans ces vers qui les ont fait connoître,  
 Leur talent dans l'oubli demeureroit caché.  
 Et qui sauroit sans moi que Cottin a prêché ?  
 La Satire ne sert qu'à rendre un fat illustre.  
 C'est que ombre au tableau, qui lui donne du lustre.  
 En les blâmant enfin, j'ai dit ce que j'en croi ;  
 Et tel qui m'en reprend, en pense autant que moi.

Was

Was ever stroke more lively and natural than this, or satire more poignant and better introduced? They praise Regnier for his simplicity. Certainly Despreaux had full as much of this quality, tho' in a different manner. Simplicity has its stages as well as degrees. But let us follow our author a little farther, to see if he has strength to support himself equally throughout.

(a) Let those who fancy that I've made too free  
With Chapelain's name, fancy so still for me.  
So good a man! another whining cries,  
Deserves not to be made a sacrifice.  
Many good judges still applaud his song:  
It may be so, but then their judgment's wrong.  
You tell me he has wit and sense: suppose  
He has, to prove it let him write in prose;  
For 'tis not ev'ry man of sense and wit

That for the lofty Epic strain is fit.  
That I allow, you see, we think the same;  
Then why so resolute my muse to blame?  
The public character she always takes,  
Nor ever into private actions rakes:  
Say, did I e'er, with base invectives, scan  
His life, and for the muse attack the man?

My

---

(a) Il a tort, dira l'un, pourquoi faut-il qu'il nomme?  
Attaquer Chapelain! ah! c'est un si bon homme.  
Balzac en fait l'éloge en cent endroits divers.  
Il est vrai, s'il m'eût cru, qu'il n'eût point fait de vers,  
Il se tue à rimer. Que n'écrit-il en prose?  
Voilà ce que l'on dit: & que dis-je autre chose?  
En blâmant ses écrits, ai-je d'un stile affreux  
Distillé sur sa vie un venin dangereux?

Ma



My satire has to virtue due regard,  
 And from the worthy man distinguishes the bard.  
 Say, if you please, he's civil and discreet;  
 Say he's a man of honour and estate;  
 'Tis granted, he is all, and more than that:  
 Yet, if you take his poems for the test  
 Of Epic song, your judgment is a jest;  
 For, as the *prince of poets*, I disown  
 His empire, and deny his title to the throne.  
 When this pretended right some fools proclaim,  
 My choler, with disdain, is in a flame;  
 And if I durst not vent my raising spleen,  
 Or tell the world my grievance with my pen,  
 \* Like the fam'd barber, I should dig a hole,  
 And there discharge the burthen of my soul;  
 There whisper to the reeds, King *Midas* wears,  
 Beneath his royal crown, an ass's ears.

Ma Muse en l'attaquant, charitable & discrète  
 Sait de l'homme d'honneur distinguer le Poète.  
 Qu'on vante en lui la foi, l'honneur, la probité,  
 Qu'on prise sa candeur, & sa civilité:  
 Qu'il soit doux, complaisant, officieux, sincère;  
 On le veut, j'y souscris, & suis prêt de me taire.  
 Mais que pour un modèle on montre ses écrits,  
 Qu'il soit le mieux renté de tous les beaux esprits:  
 Comme Roi des Auteurs, qu'on l'élève à l'empire;  
 Ma bile alors s'échauffe, & je brûle d'écrire;  
 Et s'il ne m'est permis de le dire au papier,  
 J'irai creuser la terre, & comme ce Barbien  
 Faire dire aux roseaux par un nouvel organe,  
*Midas le Roi Midas a des oreilles d'âne*

\* Men' mutire nefas, nec clam, nec cum scrobe? Nusquam.  
 Hic tamen infodiam, vidi vidi, ipse, libelle:  
 Auriculas asini Midas rex habet, PERSIUS sat. I. 119.

With

With what consummate art has he prepared the way for this last verse, *Midas*? . . . Five verses before he stiled him the prince of poets, so that one thought always involves another, and, alltogether, form one solid body. Here are none of those flighty ideas that bear no relation to any thing else; no string of dry formal maxims, passing in review one after another. The whole is of a piece, close, full, and uninterrupted. What a light do the two different judgments on Chapelain cast upon that writer, when thus placed on each side his portrait! That of the public is quite in the simple and familiar stile, *ah c'est un si bon homme*, &c. The poet's is more bold and spirited, and embellished with strokes of poetical erudition, forming, at the same time, an agreeable allegory: *mais que pour un modèle*, &c. We shall only quote ten verses more.

What hurt has my impartial satire done?  
His talent is not baulk'd, he labours on;  
Folio's on folio's still are brought to light;  
And, while there's one to read, our bard will write:  
No critic's friendly or unfriendly look  
Can make or mar the fortune of a book:

When

---

(a) Quel tort lui fais je enfin? Ai je par un écrit  
Pétrifié sa veine et glacé son esprit?  
Quand un livre au Palais se vend & se debite;  
Que chacun par ses vœux juge de son mérite;  
Que Billaine l'étale au deuxième pillier,  
Le dégoût d'un Censeur peut-elle décrier?

When once 'tis publish'd, it will have its run,  
 And is not to be sav'd, or damn'd, by one;  
 Each claims a right of judging for himself;  
 And down he'll have it from the topmost shelf.  
 Richlieu in vain the famous *Cid*\* decries,  
 All Paris sees *Chimene* with *Rodrigue's*† eyes;  
 Ev'n the whole academy wrote in vain,  
 The public did the poet's cause maintain.

We cannot be reproached with having picked and culled Boileau's works for these beauties, since the passages, where they are, do almost immediately follow one another in the same poem. And indeed he is every-where so rich and full of beauties, so abundant in excellencies of every kind; his thoughts throughout are so natural, his turns so happy, his expression so just, and his verse so harmonious and well regulated; that it is hardly possible to chuse amiss.

But how happens it then, that he has so many adversaries now-a-days? Some reproach him with want of spirit, some say he is no poet, and others, again, go so far as to attack his verse and diction.

Tho' we have no design of undertaking the defence of Mr. Boileau in this place, his reputation being far superior to any thing we can say

En vain contre le *Cid* un Ministre se ligue,  
 Tout Paris pour *Chimène* a les yeux de *Rodrigue*.  
 L'Academie en corps a beau le censurer,  
 Le public révolté s'obstine à l'admirer.

\* A tragedy of *Cornelle*.

† The two principal characters in the play.

in its behalf, and his fame such as will always remain intimately blended with that of the French letters; yet, as our labours are professedly dedicated to the improvement of youth, we cannot dispense with saying a word or two on a kind of league which has been formed against the character and writings of this great genius, and which would certainly reflect very little honour on the taste of the present age, did it not evidently proceed from caprice or prejudice. Not to mention the many who follow the stream, and had rather repeat after what they hear others say, than see with their own eyes, and judge by their own taste, to judge of Mr. Despreaux's merit, as a writer, we have only to look into his productions.

His art of poetry is a masterpiece of judgment, taste, and versification. Every line is an oracle of good sense, conveyed in the clearest and strongest manner. No-body will deny this, unless such as make it a rule to deny every thing.

His *Lutrin* is intirely a production of genius, raised upon a pin's point, to use Monf. Lamoignon's expression; it is a castle in the air, supported by nothing, but the art and power of the architect. It is a structure raised by genius, planned by judgment, and adorned by imagination; a poetic spirit animates the whole, and a just harmony diffuses graces throughout every part.

His satires and epistles, were we to judge only from those passages already quoted, are full of



salt, vivacity, and lively touches; and shall any one after this pretend to say, that Despreaux is no poet, and wants spirit; or do these words lose their signification, when applied to this author?

But he wants taste: Has he not censured Tasso, Corneille, and Quinault? What relates to Tasso, we have already spoken to; it now remains to consider his conduct, with respect to Corneille and Quinault.

No one will pretend, that Corneille, however great, is without his blemishes and faults; consequently he is an object of censure and criticisms. But Despreaux has preferred Racine to him. This cannot be clearly proved from any one of his writings. Despreaux was certainly the intimate friend of Racine; and had his works in great esteem, but he never gave any of them the preference to the *Horace*, *Cinna*, or *Rodogune* of Corneille; and, even supposing he had so done, are there not many, at this day, of the same way of thinking? But he did not like Corneille: What is that to the public at present? What have we to do with the man? It is the author we are concerned with. Allowing a coldness and indifference, nay, even an enmity to have been between Despreaux and Corneille, does that take from the talents or taste of either as a writer?

Quinault, say they, who was a man without an equal in his way, has been extremely ill used in his satires. That may be: but that will not impeach Mr. Despreaux's merit; it is rather an argument in favour of it.

Mr.

Mr. Despreaux was a zealous partisan of virtue ; a man wholly dispassionate, and almost void of any taste for pleasures ; and, by the natural bent of his character, inclined to a certain severity of manners. Could such a person as this be supposed to approve of those Lydian strains, which breathe nothing but luxury and softness, and inspire sentiments the most destructive and dangerous to the morals ? Put Quinault into the hands of a person of sound judgment, inclinable to a serious way of thinking, who has all his lifetime observed the strictest rules of probity and decorum, and is consequently more rigid upon these points, than the generality of people are at present ; let him run over the scenes of Meder, Renaldo, Roland, &c. will not the softness that runs thro' the whole of them, appear to him in the light of effeminacy, and nothing more ? And must such a person be obliged to admire the whole, under penalty of passing for a man of no taste ? Mr. Despreaux's judgment of Quinault was such an one, as might naturally be expected from a person of his character ; he had his strong reasons to dislike him, as well as his admirers have to be charmed with him.

The only consequence can be that drawn from his opinion is, that he wanted that kind of taste which was necessary to approve such a work ; but, instead of this, his adversaries conclude in the lump, that he has no taste at all. How hard is it, if, for making use of a single argument, w hich  
may

may appear a little unjust, we should immediately be deemed sophisters, and people arguing without logic, and in a deceitful manner!

If these people would be contented with saying, that the employment of a satyrift, which Mr. Despreaux professed all his life-time, does not shew him to have had any great humanity, and still less charity in his disposition; that a spirit of criticism, and continual inclination to be censuring and carping at others, is not a very laudable quality in a member of society; we might probably allow that objection its due force: but then it must come from people who are themselves remarkable for being good neighbours and charitable men. But what are we to think of that smooth tone, when it is only made use of to stab the deeper, and, under the appearance of candor, to enjoy the pleasure of being malicious? "When we are to judge of a writer of rank and merit, we should always do it with caution and respect, and, if we must be mistaken, it had much better be on the side of general approbation, than universal detraction (a)."

Upon examining the characters of the principal satyrical authors together, to see in what they resemble each other, we shall presently find that

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(a) Modeste tamen & circumspetto judicio de tantis viris pronuntiandum est ne (quod plerisque accidit) damnent quæ non intelligant. Ac si necesse sit in alterutram errare partem, omnia eorum legentibus placere, quam multa displicere maluerim. QUIN-

Horace and Boileau come nearer to each other, than either of them do to Juvenal. They both of them lived in a polite age, where the taste was pure, and the notions of beauty free from any mixture: Juvenal, on the contrary, lived at a time when polite learning was in its decline, and people judged of the goodness of a work by the richness of it, rather than by the œconomy of its ornaments.

Horace and Boileau had a mild and gentle turn: they loved simplicity; they chose their strokes, and presented them without pomp or affectation. Juvenal had a strong genius and a fiery imagination; he laid his colouring on too thick, and very often destroyed the truth, in pushing it too far.

Horace and Boileau husbanded their stock: they rallied with ease and pleasantry, and pulled off the mask but by degrees, and with good humor: but Juvenal tears it off in a fury. Sometimes the two first offer the most fragrant and purest incense, in the midst of the satyric fume: the last never praised but one man in his life, and that praise was a satire upon the rest of mankind. In a word, the pictures given us by Horace and Boileau, tho' in themselves of a disagreeable nature, have somewhat in them that is pleasing to us, and which evidently proceeds from the touch of the painter. In those of Juvenal, the colours are striking, and the strokes bold and strong.



but gross ; and it requires no great degree of delicacy to taste the beauty of them. He was impetuous and extravagant in his very nature, and, tho' he had lived even before the times of Pliny, Seneca, or Lucan, he would not, in all probability, have been able to restrain (a) himself within the proper limit of the true and the beautiful.

Persius, again, is a character by himself, and not to be likened to any one. He has not ease enough to rank with Horace ; he is too discreet to be compared with Juvenal, and too mysterious and reserved to be joined with Despreaux ; with as much politeness as the first, as much vivacity as the second, and a disposition as virtuous as the third ; he seems to be more the philosopher than either of the three. Few have the courage to read him : but who ever can get over the first reading, will find in the second

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(a) It may not be amiss to insert, in this place, a very just piece of censure, passed by Mr. Addison on this celebrated poet, in his 209th Spectator : " I have often wondered, how a person of Mr. Boileau's exquisite judgment, and known love for virtue, could think human nature a proper subject for satire, in one of his celebrated pieces called *the satire upon man*, (the 8th.) What vice or frailty can a discourse correct, which censures the whole species alike, and endeavours to shew, by some superficial strokes of wit, that brutes are the most excellent creatures of the two ? Such levelling satires can be of no use to the world, the business of satire being to expose nothing but what is corrigible, and should make a due discrimination between those who are, and those who are not the proper objects of it.

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wherewithall to recompense them for their trouble. And this poet will appear like some great man, who, at first sight, appears cold and stiff, but whose conversation has a thousand charms, when once he deigns to make himself known.

## CHAP. V.

## ENGLISH SATYRISTS.

## DRYDEN.

**T**HIS poet is author of two satires universally esteemed the most pungent and best written in our language, *Mac Flecnoe* and *Abfalom and Achitophel*. The first was written at the time of the revolution, on occasion of his being displaced as poet laureat, in favour of a man to whom he had a confirmed aversion, and who was by no means his equal in poetic merit; this was *Shadwelly*, whose name he has transmitted to posterity under the name of *Mac Flecnoe*. The other severely lashes the contrivers and abettors of the opposition against king *Charles II*; which monarch he has characterised under the name of *David*.

The following transcripts, containing the principal characters in this celebrated piece, will serve as specimens of this great poet's abilities, as a satyrist.

He begins his poem with the following character of king Charles II, under the name of David:

In pious times, e're priestcraft did begin,  
Before polygamy was made a sin;  
When man on many multiply'd his kind,  
E're one to one was cursedly confin'd:  
When nature prompted, and no law deny'd  
Promiscuous use of concubine and bride:  
Then Israel's monarch, after Heav'n's own heart,  
His vig'rous warmth did variously impart  
To wives and slaves; as wide as his command,  
Scatter'd his Maker's image thro' the land.

The character of the DUKE of MONMOUTH,  
under the name of Absalom.

Of all the numerous progeny (a), was none  
So beautiful, so brave as Absalom.  
Whether inspir'd by some diviner lust,  
His father got him with a greater gust:  
Or that his conscious destiny made way,  
By manly beauty, to imperial sway:  
Early in foreign fields he won renown,  
With kings and states ally'd to Isreal's crown.  
In peace the thoughts of war he could remove;  
And seem'd as he were only born for love.  
Whate'er he did, was done with so much ease;  
In him alone 'twas natural to please:  
His motions all accompany'd with grace,  
And paradise was open'd in his face.

Ambition and the love of praise, were, how-  
ever, the master-passions of this young prince's

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(a) David's.

mind; passions, that, for the present, deprived him of the proper use of his reason, and of those accomplishments with which Heaven had endowed him, and, in the latter end, brought him to a shameful and ignominious fate: for this our poet has apologized, in some of the most beautiful and striking lines that ever came from a human pen. Happy were it, if the sweet flowers which poetry has thus strewed over his memory, could preserve it from the foul taint that the imputation of rebellion and ingratitude have left upon it:

What cannot praise effect in mighty minds,  
When flattery sooths, and when ambition blinds?  
Desire of pow'r on earth, a vicious weed,  
Yet sprung from high, is of celestial seed:  
In God 'tis glory: and, when men aspire,  
'Tis but a spark too much of heav'nly fire.  
Th' ambitious youth, too covetous of fame,  
Too full of angel's metal in his frame,  
Unwarily was led from virtue's ways,  
Made drunk with honour, and debauch'd with praise.

If it should be objected, that these lines are rather those of a panegyrist than a satyrift, and consequently, that it is a misplaced quotation: I shall only reply, that, as they are so very beautiful, and keep up a chain or connection between the other characters, I thought it more adviseable to give them than suppress them; if in so doing I have erred, or incurred the displeasure of the judicious reader, I am heartily sorry for it



and shall haste to make him amends, by presenting him with what he must allow to be truly unkind.

The character of COOPER Earl of Shaftsbury, under the name of Achitophel.

Of these\*, the false Achitophel was first,  
 A name to all succeeding ages curst;  
 For close designs and crooked counsels fit;  
 Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit;  
 Restless, unfix'd, in principle and place;  
 In pow'r unpleas'd, impatient of disgrace:  
 A fiery soul, which, working out its way,  
 Fretted the Pigmy body to decay,  
 And o'er inform'd the tenement of clay.  
 A daring pilot in extremity,  
 Pleas'd with the danger, when the waves were high;  
 He fought the storms: but, for a calm unfit,  
 Would steer too near the sands to boast his wit.  
 Great wits to madness sure are near ally'd;  
 And thin partitions do their bounds divide;  
 Else, why should he, with wealth and honour blest,  
 Refuse his age the needful hours of rest,  
 Punish a body which he could not please,  
 Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease;  
 And all to leave, what with his toil he won,  
 To that unfeather'd two-legg'd thing, a son;  
 Got while his soul did huddl'd notions try,  
 And born a shapeless lump like anarchy;  
 In friendship false, implacable in hate,  
 Resolv'd to ruin, or to rule the state.

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\* The discontented party.

Is it possible for the sharp tooth of satire to print more deep, more mortal traces on any character, than what it has here done, at one bite, on those of the father and the son? Far be it from us to presume to determine how far truth or malice, honesty or misrepresentation, are concerned herein. We give the poet, the satyrift, and leave to others to detect the man of party or clamour.

But to proceed.

The character of the DUKE of BUCKINGHAM, under the name of *Zimri*.

Some of their chiefs were princes of the land ;

In the first rank of these did *Zimri* stand.

A man so various that he seem'd to be,

Not one, but all mankind's epitome :

Stiff in opinion, always in the wrong ;

Was every thing by starts, and nothing long ;

But, in the course of one revolving moon,

Was chymist, fidler, statesman, and buffoon ;

Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,

Besides ten thousand freaks that dy'd in thinking.

Bless'd madman, that could every hour employ

With something new, to wish or to enjoy !

Railing and praising were his usual themes ;

And both, to shew his judgment, in extremes.

So over violent, or over civil,

That every man, with him, was god or devil.

In squandering wealth was his peculiar art ;

Nothing went unrewarded but desert :

Beggar'd by fools, whom still he found too late,

He had his jest, and they had his estate.

He laugh'd himself from court, then sought relief,

By forming parties, but could ne'er be chief.

Thus wicked but in will, of means bereft,  
He left not faction, but of that was left.

These are the principal characters in this excellent satires; the under ones of which there are great numbers are all in the same masterly manner, and in such strong colouring, as not to be obliterated while the English history or language remains.

It may not be displeasing to see the character of this poet, whom we have so often had occasion to quote, drawn by a fellow poet, a contemporary, and one who knew him intimately: This is Mr. Congreve, who, in his dedication of Dryden's works to the duke of Newcastle, after having shewn him to be as amiable in private life, as a man, as he was illustrious in the eyes of the public, as a poet, goes on to consider him in this latter light: "As to his writings  
" (says he) I may venture to say in general terms,  
" that no man hath written in our language so  
" much, and so various matter; and in so various  
" manners so well. Another thing, I may say, was  
" very peculiar to him, which is, that his parts  
" did not decline with his years, but that he was  
" an improving writer to the last, even to near  
" 70 years of age, improving even in fire and  
" imagination as well as in judgment, witness  
" his ode on St. Cecilia's day, and his fables,  
" his latest performances. He was equally ex-  
" cellent in verse and prose: his prose had all  
" the clearness imaginable, without deviating to

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" the language or diction of poetry; and I have  
 " heard him frequently own with pleasure, that,  
 " if he had any talent for writing prose, it was  
 " owing to his frequently having read the writ-  
 " ings of the great archbishop Tillotson. In his  
 " poems, his diction is, wherever his subject re-  
 " quires it, so sublime and so truly poetical, that its  
 " essence like that of pure gold, cannot be destroyed.  
 " Take his verses, and divest them of their rhymes,  
 " disjoint them of their numbers, transpose their  
 " expressions, make what arrangement or dis-  
 " position you please in his words; yet shall  
 " there eternally be poetry, and something which  
 " will be found incapable of being reduced to  
 " absolute prose; what he has done in any one  
 " species, or distinct kind of writing, would  
 " have been sufficient to have acquired him a  
 " very great name. If he had written nothing  
 " but his prefaces, or nothing but his songs,  
 " or his prologues, each of them would have  
 " intitled him to the preference and distinction  
 " of excelling in its kind."

*A parallel between DRYDEN and Mr. POPE.*

Tho' the frequent quotations we have had oc-  
 casion to make from the writings of these two  
 great poets, will, doubtless, have furnished our  
 readers with the means of drawing a comparison  
 between them; yet, will it not, perhaps, be  
 displeasing to some of them, if we pursue the  
 comparison a little further, and endeavour to dis-  
 cover to whom the superiority is justly to be attri-  
 buted, and to which of them poetry owes the high-  
 est obligations.



When Dryden came into the world, he found poetry in a very imperfect state; its numbers were unpolished, its cadences rough, and there was nothing of harmony or melliflence to give it a graceful flow. In this harsh unmusical situation Dryden found it, he polished the rough diamond, he taught it to shine, and connected beauty, elegance, and strength, in all his poetical compositions. Though Dryden thus polished our English numbers, and thus harmonized our versification; it cannot be said, that he carried his art to perfection: much was yet left undone; his lines, with all their smoothness, were often rambling, and expletives were frequently introduced, to compleat his measures: it was apparent, therefore, that an additional harmony might still be given to our numbers, and that cadences were yet capable of a more musical modulation. To effect this purpose, Mr. Pope arose, who, with an ear elegantly delicate, and the advantage of the finest genius, so harmonizes the English numbers, as to make them completely musical. His numbers are, likewise, so minutely correct, that it would be difficult to conceive, how any of his lines can be altered to advantage. He has enacted a kind of mechanical versification; every line is alike; and, tho' they are sweetly musical, they want diversity: for he has not studied so great a variety of pauses, and where the accents may be laid gracefully. The structure of his verse is the best; and a line of his is more musical than any

other

other line can be made, by placing the accents elsewhere; but we are not quite certain, whether the ear is not apt to be soon cloyed with this uniformity of elegance, this sameness of harmony. It must be acknowledged, however, that he has much improved upon Dryden in the article of versification, and in that part of poetry is greatly his superior. But, tho' this must be acknowledged, perhaps, it will not necessarily follow, that his genius was therefore superior.

The grand characteristic of a poet is his invention, the surest distinction of a great genius. In Mr. Pope, nothing is so truly original as his Rape of the Lock, nor discovers so much invention. In this kind of mock heroic, he is without a rival in our language; for Dryden has written nothing of the kind. His other work, which discovers invention, fine designing, and admirable execution, is his Dunciad; which, tho' built on Dryden's Mac Flecknoe, is yet so much superior, that, in satyric writing, the palm must justly be yielded to him. In Mr. Dryden's Absalom and Achitophel, there are, indeed, the most poignant strokes of satire, and characters drawn with the most masterly touches; but this poem, with all its excellencies, is much inferior to the Dunciad, tho' Dryden had advantages which Pope had not; for Dryden's characters are men of great eminence and figure in the state, while Pope has to expose men of obscure birth and unimportant lives, only distinguished from

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the herd of mankind by a glimmering of genius, which rendered the greatest part of them more emphatically contemptible: Pope's was the hardest task, and he has executed it with the greatest success. As Mr. Dryden must, undoubtedly, have yielded to Pope in satyric writing, it is incumbent on the partizans of Dryden to name another species of composition in which the former excells, so as to throw the balance again upon the side of Dryden. This species is the lyric, in which, the warmest votaries of Pope must certainly acknowledge that he is much inferior; as an irresistible proof of this, we need only compare Mr. Dryden's ode on St. Cecilia's day with Mr. Pope's; in which, the disparity is so apparent, that we know not, if the most finished of Pope's compositions has discovered such a variety and command of numbers.

It has been generally acknowledged, that the lyric is a more excellent kind of writing than the satyric, and, consequently, he who excells in the most excellent species, must, undoubtedly, be esteemed the greatest poet.-----Mr. Pope has very happily succeeded in many of his occasional pieces: such as his epistle from Eloisa to Abelard, his elegy on an unfortunate young lady, and a variety of other performances deservedly celebrated. To these may be opposed Mr. Dryden's fables, which, tho' written in a very advanced age, are yet the most perfect of his works. In these fables there is, perhaps, a greater variety



riety than in Pope's occasional pieces : most of them, indeed, are translations, but such as are original, shew a great extent of invention, and a large compass of genius.

There are not, in Pope's works, such poignant discoveries of wit, or such a general knowledge of the humors and characters of men, as in the prologues and epilogues of Dryden ; which are the best records of the whims and capricious oddities of the times in which they were written.

When these two great geniusses are considered in the light of translators, it will, indeed, be difficult to determine into whose scale the balance should be thrown. That Mr. Pope had a more arduous province in doing justice to Homer, than Dryden, with regard to Virgil, is certainly true, as Homer is a more various and diffuse poet than Virgil : and it is likewise true, that Pope has even exceeded Dryden in the execution, and none will deny, that Pope's Homer's Iliad is a finer poem than Dryden's Æneis of Virgil ; making allowance for the disproportion of the original authors. But then a candid critic should reflect, that, as Dryden was prior in the great attempt of rendering Virgil into English, so did he perform the task under many disadvantages, which Pope, by a happier situation in life, was enabled to avoid, and could not but improve upon Dryden's errors, tho' the authors translated were not the same : and it is much to be doubted, if Dryden were to translate the Æneid now, with that attention



attention which the correctness of the present age would force upon him, whether the preference would be due to Pope's Homer.

But supposing it to be yielded (as it certainly must) that the latter bard was the greatest translator; we are now to throw into Mr. Dryden's scale all his dramatic works; which, tho' not the most excellent of his writings, yet, as nothing of Mr. Pope's can be opposed to them, they have an undoubted right to turn the balance greatly in favour of Mr. Dryden.-----When the two poets are considered as critics, the comparison will very imperfectly hold. Dryden's dedications and prefaces, besides that they are more numerous, and are the best models for court panegyrics, shew that he understood poetry as an art beyond any man that ever lived; and, in explaining this art, he so illumined the mind, by his clear and perspicuous reasoning, that dulness itself became capable of discerning.

Perhaps it may be true, that Pope's works are read with more appetite, as there is a greater evenness and correctness in them: but, in perusing the works of Dryden, the mind will take a wider range, and be more fraught with poetical ideas. In a word, we admire Dryden as the greater genius, and Pope as the most pleasing versifier.

CIBBER's Lives of poets, Vol. v. p. 247.

Dr.

## DR. YOUNG.

The satires of this author have been received in the most favourable manner, both at home and abroad.

Like Horace, he has adopted the *laughing satire*, as deeming it to bid the fairest for success; "for (as he himself tells us in his preface) the world is too proud to be fond of a serious tutor; and, when an author is in a passion, the laugh generally, as in conversation, turns against him."

His satires are seven in number, under the one general title, of Love of Fame; the universal passion.

He begins his first satire by the most elegant turned compliment on his patron, the duke of Dorset:

My verse is satire, DORSET, lend your ear,  
And patronize a muse you cannot fear.  
To poets sacred is a Dorset's name,  
Their wonted passport thro' the gates of fame:  
It bribes the partial reader into praise,  
And throws a glory round the shelter'd lays:  
The dazzled judgment fewer faults can see,  
And gives applause to B——e or to me.  
But you decline the mistress we pursue;  
Others are fond of fame, but fame of you.

He afterwards proceeds to lament the silence of good satyrists, at a time when they seem most

wanted;

wanted; and, from thence, takes occasion to fall into the following beautiful panegyric on some of our most celebrated writers of the last and present age:

Why slumbers POPE, who leads the tuneful train,  
Nor hears that virtue which he loves complain?  
DORNE, DORSET, DRYDEN, ROCHESTER, are dead,  
And guilt's chief foe, in ADDISON, is fled.  
CONGREVE, who, crown'd with lawrels fairly won,  
Sits smiling at the goal while others run:  
He will not write (and more provoking still)  
Ye gods! he will not write, and MOEVIUS will.

V. 34—42.

A few lines afterwards follows the proposition of the work, viz. a satire on the universal passion for love of fame, which reigns in mankind; and the various follies and vices it hurries them into, in their endeavours to attain it, and its different influence on different persons, he sums up, in general terms, in the fourteen following lines:

The love of praise, howe'er conceal'd by art,  
Reigns more or less, and glows in every heart:  
The proud, to gain it, toils on toils endure;  
The modest shun it but to make it sure.  
O'er globes, and sceptres, now on thrones it swells,  
Now trims the midnight lamps in college cells:  
'Tis Tory, Whig, it plots, prays, preaches, pleads,  
Harangues in senates, squeaks in masquerades.  
Here to S——e's humour makes a bold pretence,  
There, bolder, aims at P——y's eloquence.

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It aids the *dancer's* heel, the *writer's* head,  
 And heaps the plain with mountains of the dead:  
 Nor ends with *life*, but nods in *fable plumes*,  
 Adorns our *hearse*, and flatters on our *tomb*.

V. 51—64.

What can be more strong than the satire in the last two lines? How delicately does he expose that *posthumous* folly, if I may be allowed the expression, of a death parade and funeral pomp, which too often make a great article in the last wills of our people of fashion? But let us see how he unfolds the several follies and vices which result from inordinate an passion for praise or fame; of which he has here only given us general sketch. Here follows one instance:

Warm in pursuit of foxes and renown,  
 HIPPLYTUS demands theylvan crown:  
 But FLORIO's fame, the product of a show'r,  
 Grows in his garden, an illustrious flower.  
 Why teems the earth? Why melt the vernal skies?  
 Why shines the sun? To make \* *Paul Diack* rise.  
 From morn to night has Florio gazing stood,  
 And wonder'd how the gods could be so good.  
 What shape? What hue? Was ever nymph so fair!  
 He doats! he dies! he too is *rooted* there.  
 O solid bliss, which nothing can destroy,  
 Except a cat, a bird, or idle boy?

Sat. II. v. 19—30.

\* The name of a tulip.



But all men want amusement, and what crime,  
In such a paradise, to fool their time?  
None: but why proud of this? To fame they soar,  
We grant *they're idle*, if they'll ask no more.

We smile at florists, we despise their joy,  
And think their hearts inamour'd of a toy,  
But are those wiser whom we most admire,  
Survey with envy, and pursue with fire?  
What's she, who sighs for wealth, or fame, or pow'r?  
Another FLORIO doating on a flower:  
A short-liv'd flower; and which has often sprung  
From sordid arts as FLORIO's, out of dung.

Ibid. v. 40—51.

The ensuing twelve lines are the in true Horatian spirit of satire:

MOROSE is sunk with shame, whene'er surpriz'd,  
In linen clean, or peuke undisguis'd.  
No sublunary chance his vestments fear;  
Valu'd, like leopards, as their spots appear.  
A fam'd *surcoat* he wears, which once was blue;  
And his foot swims in a capacious shoe.  
One day his wife (for who can wives reclaim?)  
Levell'd her barb'rous needle at his fame:  
But open force was vain; by night she went,  
And, while he slept, surpriz'd the darling rent:  
Where yawn'd the frize, is now become a doubt,  
And glory, at one entrance, quite shut-out (a).

Ibid. v. 95, 181—193.

He then looks at home, and thus addresses himself:

O Thou, myself abroad our counsels warn,  
 And, like ill husbands, take no care at home:  
 Thou too art wounded with the common dart,  
 And love of fame lies throbbing at thy heart:  
 And what wise means to claim it hast thou chose?  
 Know *fame* and *fortune* both are made of prose.  
 Is thy ambition sweating for a rhyme,  
 Thou unambitious fool, at this late time?  
 While I a moment name, that moment's past;  
 I'm nearer death in this verse than the last:  
 What then is to be done? Be wise with speed;  
 A fool at forty is a fool indeed.

And afterwards concludes this satire with the following beautiful reflections:

What's so foolish as the chace of fame?  
 How vain the prize? How impotent our aim?  
 For what are men who grasp at praise sublime,  
 But bubbles on the rapid stream of time;  
 That rise and fall, that swell, and are no more,  
 Born and forgot, ten thousand in an hour?

His fifth and sixth are satires on the women?  
 The former of these begins thus:

Nor reigns ambition in bold *man* alone,  
 Soft *female* hearts the rude invader own:  
 But there, indeed, it deals in nicer things,  
 Than routing armies, and dethroning kings.  
 Attend, and you discern it in the fair;  
 Conduct a finger, or reclaim a hair;  
 Or roll the lucid orbit of an eye,  
 Or, in full joy, elaborate a sigh.  
 The sex we honour, tho' their faults we blame,  
 Nay, thank their faults for such a fruitful theme:

A theme,

A theme, —— doubly kind to me,  
 Since satyrizing those is praising thee;  
 Who wouldst not bear, too modestly refin'd,  
 A panegyric of a grosser kind.

The following character of a prude is the most exquisitely struck off that can be imagined:

ZARA resembles Etna crown'd with snows,  
 Without she freezes, and within she glows;  
 Twice, ere the sun descends, with zeal inspir'd,  
 From the vain converse of the world retir'd,  
 She reads the *psalms* and *chapters* for the day,  
 In——*Cleopatra*, or the next new play.  
 Thus, gloomy ZARA, with a solemn grace,  
 Deceives mankind, and *hides* behind her face.

Sat. v. v. 43—50.

And these lines are very beautiful and picturesque:

TEAL! how I tremble at thy fatal stream!  
 As *Lethe*, dreadful to the love of fame:  
 What devastations on thy banks are seen;  
 What *shades* of mighty names which *once* have been:  
 An hecatomb of characters supplies,  
 Thy painted altars daily sacrifice.  
 H—— S—— B—— aspers'd by thee decay'd,  
 As grains of finest sugar melt away,  
 And recommend the more to mortal taste,  
 Scandal's the sweet'ner of a female feast.

Sat. vi. v. 347—356.

His seventh satire begins with an address to Sir Robert Walpole, then principal minister of state, whom he compliments in the most refined manner:

On

On this last labour, this my closing strain,  
 Smile, WALPOLE, or the *Nine* inspire in vain :  
 To thee 'tis due ; that verse how justly thine,  
 Where BRUNSWICK'S glory crowns the whole design ?  
 That glory which thy counsels make so bright,  
 That glory which on thee reflects a light.  
 Illustrious commerce, and but rarely known,  
 To *give* and *take* a lustre from the throne !

Nor think that thou art foreign to my theme ;  
 The fountain is not foreign to the stream.  
 How all mankind will be surpriz'd to see  
 This flood of British folly charg'd on thee !  
 Say, *Britain*, whence this caprice of thy sons,  
 Which thro' their various ranks with fury runs ?  
 The cause is plain, a cause which we must bless ;  
 For caprice is the daughter of *success*.  
 (A bad effect, but from a pleasing cause !)  
 And gives our rulers undesign'd applause ;  
 Tells how their conduct bids our wealth increase,  
 And lulls us in the downy lap of *peace*.

How insinuatingly beautiful is this panegyric ?  
 Such oblique praise is infinitely more delicate than  
 all the bare-faced panegyrics that can be bestow-  
 ed by the voice of adulation ; it steals into the  
 heart, and, like the charms of modesty, attracts  
 and pleases us, whilst nothing but disgust waits  
 on the lewd advances of the shameless prostitute.

The lines with which he concludes this (his  
 last) satire, are an address to the king, on the  
 confusion these realms were thrown into, from the  
 d anger his sacred person was in by a violent storm  
 he met with at sea, on his return from his Ger-



man dominions; and, in the very midst of the compliment he is paying his royal master, he artfully steals in the highest encomium on his faithful minister and servant, whose unwearied diligence and anxiety, at that time, he beautifully describes. The whole of this passage is too elegant and full of poetical charms, to suffer us to pass it by unquoted :

While *sea* and *air*, great *BRUNSWICK*, shook our state,  
And sported with a king and kingdom's fate :  
Depriv'd of what she lov'd, and press'd with fear,  
Of ever losing what she held most dear,  
How did *BRITANNIA*, like (*a*) *ACHILLES*, weep,  
And tell her sorrows to the kindred deep ?  
Hang o'er the floods, and, in devotion warm,  
Strive, for thee, with the surge, and fight the storm ?

What felt thy *WALFOL*, pilot of the realm ?

Our *Palmer* slept not at the helm !

His eye ne'er clos'd, long since mur'd to wake,

And outwatch ev'ry star for *Brunswick's* sake.

By thwarting passions toss'd, by cares oppress'd,

He found the tempest pictur'd in his breast :

But *now*, what joys that gloom of heart dispel,

No pow'rs of language but his own can tell :

His own, which nature and the graces form,

At will to raise or hush the civil storm.

From the transcripts here given, the reader will be enabled to form a judgment of this pleasing satyrift, and determine how far he has kept

up to the model he proposed to himself in setting out ; which was, to use his own words,

The courtly (a) Roman's shining path to tread,  
And sharply *smile* prevailing folly dead.

Sat. L. v. 45 and 46.

## CHAPTER VI.

Of the epistle in verse.

**T**HE epistle in verse is no other than a letter to some particular person ; it has rules in common with those belonging to the epistolary style ; of which we have occasion to speak in the fourth volume.

The particular rules which belong to it, as a letter in verse, may all be reduced to this one head, viz. To give it a degree of force or elegance, or, in other words, of care and exactness, somewhat above what it would require, if only wrote in prose.

The epistle is unbounded in its matter. Under this title, we may praise, blame, relate, philosophize, descant, and instruct. It admits of every kind of style, elevating or lowering it according to the different subjects, and the rank of the writer, or of the person to whom he writes. Despreaux has described the passage of the Rhine

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(a) *Honore*. 34. again, and in

in verses worthy an epic poem. Horace has written to Augustus, and explains to him all the rules of good sense and good taste, with a strength and dignity not to be met with in other epistles. Nay, we may go yet further: the same epistle will admit of all the variety of strains, at least so far as they have any relation to the subject. To establish a maxim, it may relate a heroic, comic, or historical action, in the sublime, middle, or simple style. I have said, that the strains must have a relation to the subject; because, the person who writes, as well as he who is written to, always remaining the same, the strain of the person must necessarily be the same in the same letter.

The epistle begins and ends without preparation; and the title it bears serves as an advertisement to the reader, not to judge of the work otherwise than of a letter.

## ARTICLE III.

### OF THE EPIGRAM.

#### CHAP. I.

#### The origin of the epigram.

**T**HE epigram was formerly the same with what we now call *inscription*. It was engraved on the fronts of temples, monuments, public buildings, &c. Those which were placed

on

on tombs, were from thence called *epitaphs*, from *ἐπὶ* signifying *upon*, and *τάφος* a *tomb*.

The nearer we approach to antiquity, the more simple we find these inscriptions. Some consisted only of a monogram, or of the simple initial letters of certain words, the others being left for the reader to guess. Sometimes they were sentences of morality, as that on the temple of Apollo at Delphos, *Γινῶθι σεαυτόν*, *know thyself*: But, in general, they were the histories of the monuments themselves, on what account they were erected, the name of the person by whom they were erected, the time when, &c.

It was sufficient then, as it is now, that these inscriptions should contain a determinate sense, clearly and plainly expressed, and in the fewest words, that is, by conveying only the principal thoughts, and leaving out every thing superfluous. The inscription which the king of Prussia has placed over the hospital for invalids, which he has lately built in imitation of that built by Lewis XIV, has the true character of the antient inscriptions: *Læso militi & invicto, for the maimed and unconquered soldier*. This inscription is just and natural; it conveys a beautiful thought, and conveys it only in part.

We have, still remaining, a great number of inscriptions that retain a part of this character in a collection known by the title of *Anthologia*. We owe this collection to Maximus Planudes, the same who, in the fourteenth cen-



tury, published a collection of fables, under the name of *Æsop*. The great simplicity of these inscriptions gave occasion to Racan to say, one day, when he was served with a mess of very insipid soup, after having been reading the *Anthologia*, that it was *potage à la Grecque*; a Greek soup. This *bon môt* took greatly with many people, who condemned the Greek inscriptions, for that very quality which makes their greatest merit. There are still numbers of people who pretend to ridicule the Greeks on this article, as if it was a matter of shame not to excel in conceits, or that it was reasonable to suppose, that those who were distinguished, in a superior manner, for that elegant wit, which other nations called the Attic salt, would not have given this pointed turn to a thought, had they looked upon it as a thing essential to its merit. We often find fault with their epigrams, for want of a competent knowledge to judge of them. Nothing depends upon so small a circumstance as a *bon môt*, and how many are there of our own, that lose all their spirit with foreigners, for want of being rightly understood?

The Latins had their epigrammatists, as well as the Greeks. Catullus was author of a considerable number, which would be all equally excellent in their kind, was nothing more required in an epigram, than a happy and delicate turn of expression, without regard to modesty and decency.

Martial has furnished us with a very large

collection;

collection ; of which he himself gives the following character in his first book :

*Sunt bona, sunt quedam mediocria, sunt mala plura  
Quæ legis hic : aliter non fit, Avite, liber.*

Some good, some tolerable, but more bad ;  
In every work the like must still be had.

Catullus is more soft, more easy, and more natural. Martial more sprightly, nervous, and concise.

We shall now proceed to explain the nature of the epigram, and to shew its several parts and essential qualifications.

## CHAP. II.

What an epigram is.

**SOME** authors have defined the epigram, a witty thought. But I cannot think the term witty sufficiently comprehensive, to take in all the several kinds of epigrams ; among which, there are many, where the spirit understood by the word *witty* is entirely wanting : as for example, in this from Maynard :

*Las d'espérer & de me plaindre  
Des muses, des grands & du fort,  
C'est ici que j'attens la mort,  
Sans la désirer, ni la craindre.*

Sick of fruitless hopes and cares,  
Of cursing genius, friends, and stars,

Here calmly life's last hour I wait,  
Nor wish nor fear th' approach of fate.

This thought, or rather sentiment, is a true epigram ; and yet it has nothing of that flash, that smartness, which constitutes what is called a *witty thought*.

We therefore shall define the epigram, an interesting thought, presented in a happy manner, and in few words.

It has a great extent of matter ; it can attain the noblest heights in all the kinds of writing, and can let itself down to the lowest degree. It praises virtue, lashes vice, and revenges the public on the impertinences of a fool, or a coxcomb, &c. Indeed, it appears more to advantage in the simple or middling, than in the higher kinds of writing ; because its character is ease and freedom.

An epigram must always consist of two parts, viz. the exposition of the subject, or thing, which has occasioned, or given birth to the thought ; and the thought itself, which is called the *point*, as that which excites the reader's curiosity, and interests him. The exposition should be plain, easy, and clear, and the thought free, both in itself, and the manner of its turn. These qualifications will be necessarily explained, as we explain the definition.

An epigram is a *thought* ; this word comprehends not only ideas, judgments, and reasonings, but

but likewise, sentiments. We have an example of this in the epigram last cited from Maynard. The following from Martial is of the same kind :

Non amo te, Sabidi, nec possum dicere quare :  
Hoc tantum possum dicere, non amo te. Lib. I.

There is nothing more than pure sentiment in this thought.

In the second place, the epigram must *be interesting, and presented in a happy manner, and in few words*. These qualifications constitute the essential difference of the epigram from every other kind of poem.

1. Its first essential qualification is *brevity* : it is only a single thought. If, to arrive at this, the reader is obliged to go over a great number of verses, the success will hardly answer the pains he has been at. It is very rare to meet with a thought so rich, as to communicate its spirit to fifteen or twenty verses that come before it, and yet preserve sufficient strength to end with smartness. Here follows one of this kind, written by Maynard, to cardinal de Richelieu, which has been deservedly famous, both on account of its own merit, and the answer given to it by the cardinal :

Armand, l'âge affoiblit mes yeux,  
Et toute ma chaleur me quitte,  
Je verrai bientôt mes ayeux  
Sur le rivage du Cocyte.



C'est où je serai des suivans  
 De ce bon monarque de France,  
 Qui fut le pere des savans  
 Dans un siècle plein d'ignorance.  
 Dès que j'approcherai de lui,  
 Il voudra que je lui raconte  
 Tout ce que tu fais aujourd'hui  
 Pour combler l'Espagne de honte,  
 Je contenterai son désir  
 Par le beau récit de ta vie,  
 Et charmerai le déplaisir  
 Qui lui fit maudire Pavie.  
 Mais s'il demande à quel emploi  
 Tu m'as occupé dans le monde,  
 Et quel bien j'ai reçu de toi,  
 Que veux-tu que je lui réponde?

Thus englished : (a)

Sick of a life, possess'd in vain,  
 I soon shall wait upon the ghost  
 Of our late monarch (b); in whose reign  
 None, who had merit, miss'd a post.

Then will I charm him with your name,  
 And all your glorious wonders done;

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(a) The original, of which this is a good imitation, but not strictly a translation, passes for the finest little piece of poetry in the FRENCH language; tho' the critics think it rather too long for an epigram. It was addressed to cardinal RICHELIEU, who, upon reading the last line, answered, very smartly,—Nothing—So that it appears, the greatest of patrons are not always engaged by mere merit.

(b) Francis I. the restorer of learning in France.

The pow'r of *France*—the *Spaniard's* shame;  
 The rising honours of his son;  
 Grateful the royal shade will smile,  
 And dwell delighted on your name:  
 Sweetly appeas'd, his griefs beguile,  
 And drown old losses (a) in new fame.  
 But when he asks me, in what post  
 I did your wish'd commands obey,  
 And how I shar'd your favour most  
 —What would you please to have me say?

Nothing can be written with a greater spirit,  
 or a more delicate turn, than this epigram, and  
 yet it seems too long before we get to the end of  
 it. The following is much more lively:

Ci gît ma femme : ah ! qu'elle est bien,  
 Pour son repos & pour le mien.

Thus englished :

Here lies my wife, *STILL may she lie*;  
 She's easy now, and so am I.

And yet we must not condemn, as bad, every  
 epigram that is somewhat long. Perhaps, our  
 own vivacity may make us discover faults, where  
 in reality there are none, as considering only the  
 quality, or nature of the thing. We meet, both in  
 Martial and Catullus, with some of twenty and  
 thirty verses, and even longer. The general  
 rule, that a discourse is not too long, when all

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(a) Alluding to the siege of Pavia, at which he was taken prisoner.

the words lead to the thought, and the several necessary ideas contribute to form a just sense, is applicable here as well as elsewhere.

2. The thought of an epigram should be *interesting*. The interest depends as often on the matter in which the thing is presented, as on the thing itself. Therefore, there are two manners of interesting us in an epigram, by the design, and by the whole.

An epigram is interesting in the design, when it contains some important truth, as in the following one from Malherbe :

Vois-tu, passant, couler cette onde,  
Et s'écouler incessamment ?  
Ainsi fuit la gloire du monde,  
Et rien que Dieu n'est permanent.

Or this from Martial, translated by Mr. Sewel :

When all the blandishments of life are gone,  
The coward creeps to death, the brave lives on.

It may interest us by a fine thought, as in the following from the Anthologia :

Quand la dernière fois dans le sacré vallon,  
La troupe des neuf sœurs par l'ordre d'Apollon  
Lut l'Iliade & l'Odyssée,

Chacune à les louer se montrant empressée :

Apprenez un secret qu'ignore l'univers,

Leur dit alors le Dieu des vers.

Jadis avec Homère aux rives du Permesse

Dans ce bois de lauriers, où seul il me suivoit,

Je les fis toutes deux : plein d'une douce ivresse

Je chantois, Homère écrivoit.

Thus

Thus englished :

By *Phæbus*' command on *Parnassius* when last

The Muses the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* read,  
As on both their encomiums they lavishly past,

" I'll tell you a secret", the Deity said ;

" Heretofore, as on *Helicon*'s banks I was straying,

" That *HOMER* skulk'd near, tho' I thought me  
alone ;

" These poems I form'd but, enraptur'd displaying,

" What I sung, the thief wrote, and so made them  
his own".

This in the Greek is contained in one single  
line, and must, consequently, have infinitely more  
life and spirit :

*Πῶς μὲν ἴδω' ἱερὰς δὲ θύρας Ὀμήρου.*

Sometimes the impression arises from the oddity  
of the thought :

Sometimes from its bitterness, as in the follow-  
ing on a woman who set up for handsome, when  
she was quite the reverse :

En vain elle fait la mignarde,

Chaque jour elle s'enlaidit :

Ce n'est pas que je la regarde,

Mais toute le monde me le dit.

Or this on a lovely common woman :

Bright as the day, and as the morning fair,

Such *Chloe* is — and common as the air.



And sometimes from an unexpected piece of absurdity. Of this kind is the bon môt related of Cato, by St. Augustin, and thus translated by Mr. Barraton :

Autrefois un Romain s'en vint fort affligé  
Raconter à Caton, que la nuit précédente,  
Son soulier des souris avoit été rongé :  
Chose qui lui sembloit tout-à-fait effrayante.  
Mon ami, dit Caton, reprenez vos esprits :  
Cet accident en soi n'a rien d'épouvantable ;  
Mais si votre soulier eût rongé les souris,  
C'autroit été sans doute un prodige effroyable.

*Mr. Barraton.*

Thus englished :

To CATO one morning in haste came a friend,  
Affrighted to know what this sign might portend ;  
“ That his shoe by the rats had been gnaw'd in the  
night,  
“ And left by the vermin in terrible plight.”—  
Said CATO, “ my friend, your best spirits recall ;  
“ This story has nothing surprizing at all :  
“ Had the shoe eat the rats, I should then have agreed,  
“ That the omen had surely been fatal indeed.”—

Sometimes by the delicacy of the sentiment :

Elevé dans la vertu,  
Et malheureux avec elle,  
Je disois : A quoi fers-tu,  
Pauvre & stérile vertu !  
Ta droiture & tout ton zèle  
Tout compté, tout rabattu,  
Ne valent pas un fêtu ;

Mais

Mais voyant que l'on couronne  
 Aujourd'hui le grand Pomponne,  
 Aussi-tôt je me suis tu ;  
 A quelque chose elle est bonne.

*Le Laboureur.*

Or the following, which is no less elegant and well turned :

On Miss Flloyd.

When Cupid did his grandsire Jove intreat  
 To form some beauty by a new receipt,  
 Jove sent, and found, far in a country-scene,  
 Truth, innocence, good-nature, looks serene ;  
 From which ingredients, first, the dext'rous boy  
 Pick'd the demure, the awkward, and the coy ;  
 The Graces from the court did next provide  
 Breeding, and wit, and air, and decent pride ;  
 Those Venus cleans'd from every spurious grain  
 Of nice, coquet, affected, pert, and vain.  
 Jove mix'd up all, and his best clay employ'd,  
 Then call'd the happy composition, — FLOYD.

In some it is the simplicity of the thought,  
 Fontaine's epitaph has this charming simplicity,  
 both in the design and turn :

Jean s'en alla comme il étoit venu,  
 Mangea le fonds avec le revenu,  
 Tint les trésors chose peu nécessaire.  
 Quant à son tems bien le sut dispenser ;  
 Deux parts en fit, dont il souloit passer  
 L'une à dormir, & l'autre à ne rien faire.

To

To which may be added that made by Mr. Prior on himself :

Courtiers and heralds, by your leave,  
Here lie the bones of Matthew Prior,  
A son of Adam and of Eve ;  
Let Bourbon or Nassau go higher.

Some turns interest by their symmetry, as the following from Ausonius :

Infelix Dido nulli bene nupta marito,  
Hoc pereunte fugis, hoc fugiente peris.

Which has been thus happily rendered into English, tho' judged by many too comprehensive to be brought into the same number of lines :

Poor queen ! twice doom'd disastrous love to try,  
You fly the dying, for the flying die.

Those epigrams whose only wit lies in a jingle of words, a pun, or a quibble, are at present, deservedly, held in the least esteem of any ; either from the little pains that are required in making them, or from their bordering too much upon buffoonery ; or, lastly, because they are mark of a mind wholly taken up with studying the likeness of sound in words of different acceptation.

The third quality of the epigram is, that the thought *be presented in a happy manner*. The first thing required towards this is, to make choice of that kind of verse which best suits it. Every  
thought

thought has a configuration, as it were, natural to it. Now, if in expressing it we neglect to give it this suitable form, we deprive it of the greatest part of its merit. If it is to be expressed in Latin, and we would have it symmetrical, it will then require the elegiac verse, as in that of Ausonius: *Infelix Dido*. Sometimes it requires the hendecasyllable, or verse of eleven feet, which is the smoothest of all the Latin verses: such is the following from Catullus, on the death of his mistress's sparrow:

*Lugete ô Veneres, Cupidinesque,  
Et quantum est hominum venustiorum,  
Passer mortuus est meæ puellæ,  
Passer deliciæ meæ puellæ,  
Quem plus illa oculis suis amabat;  
Nam mellitus erat, suamque norat  
Ipsam tam benè quàm puella matrem;  
Nec sese à gremio illius movebat.  
Sed circumfiliens modo huc, modo illuc,  
Ad solam Dominam usque pipilabat.  
Qui nunc it per iter tenebricosum,  
Illuc unde negant redire quemquam.  
At vobis malè fit, malæ tenebræ  
Orci, quæ omnia bella devoratis,  
Tam bellum mihi passerem abstulistis.  
O factum malè! ô miselle passer!  
Tuâ nunc operâ meæ puellæ  
Flendo turgiduli rubent ocelli.*

We do not give a translation of this little piece, as we quote it only as an example of the particular form we have been speaking of, and that



that this form cannot be preserved in a translation. For almost all works that are carried to a certain point of delicacy, become wholly *untranslatable*, if I may be allowed the expression. I do not know, indeed, whether Madame Deshoulières, whose writings have so much the turn of Catullus, might not have been happy enough to have preserved some part of the spirit of this: and, perhaps, Catullus himself might not have succeeded so well, had he made choice of the hexameter, pentameter, or iambus; or, indeed, any other verse than the hendecasyllable; which alone possesses that prosaic simplicity so nearly allied to the sentiment it would express.

If we cannot make ourselves sufficiently masters of the form of the thought, to preserve the same verse throughout the whole of the epigram, we must, at least, take care that the close be in the suitable form. It may, sometimes, be a merit in an epigram to have different measures in the verse; it may, by this means, become more simple and striking; because every part of the thought will be rendered fully, and without superfluity; which is a qualification we particularly look for in a good epigram.

The second object to be considered in the manner of presenting the thought, is, to preserve all its wit and force. An ingenious writer, in the course of a connected work, may now and then fall upon an epigrammatical conceit; but then he will blunt the edge of it, that it may

may appear of a piece with the rest of his work; whereas the epigrammatist, when he finds any thing like a conceit in a piece of writing, will use all his art to whet it to a point, and give it that glitter which suits his purpose.

The third object regards the elocution, or style. In a work of a considerable length, we are ready to excuse the author, if he sometimes fails; nay, even a fault or two may pass unnoticed. But we overlook nothing in an epigram: the least fault is instantly remarked. We expect all its parts to be properly connected, and play with ease and freedom; the ear must not be burthened with an unnecessary word, nor offended by harsh or dissonant sounds; the mind must not be embarrassed with any tedious construction; no strained elisions, nor useless or far-fetched ideas: in a word, the thought must be proper and concise, yet free and easy. This, indeed, should be observed in every work of taste, but is more particularly required in the epigram. Hence we may infer, how mistaken a notion it is, that a happy point is all that is requisite to an epigram. The point is, indeed, the principal part, but still it is indebted for some share of its merit to the other parts which prepare the way for it.

From what has been said, we shall be at no great loss to point out the many defects we meet with in this species of writing. I do not mean those obscenities and indecencies, which can only please the lowest class of people, and which were  
generally

generally condemned even by the heathens themselves; nor yet those satyrical and biting epigrams, which sport in the ruin of a character and reputation, and which every one is alike concerned to detest; it shews a great want of humanity in those who make use of them, and no small share of envy and ill-nature in those who delight to read them. The faults we here speak of, are such only as regard the taste.

In the first place, then, a false thought is one of the greatest blemishes that can be found in an epigram. It leaves a flatness, and even disgust behind it. What can be more disagreeable than the following pretended epigram of a person whose mistress had thrown herself into a convent?

Quoique par une étrange & soudaine rigueur  
Il semble qu'aujourd'hui Climène me confonde,  
Le cloître ne doit point étonner ma langueur;  
Et c'est le seul espoir où mon ame se fonde,  
Que n'ayant plus le choix de sortir de mon cœur,  
Il est bien mal aisé qu'elle sorte du monde.

Thus englished:

In vain, too hasty and severe!

You think to wound an heart sincere,

And blast its promis'd joy;

In vain you bid the world farewell,

Resolv'd to seek the cloister'd cell,

And all my hopes destroy.

How from that world can you depart,

While I still keep you in my heart?

But,

But, if the falsity of the thought is compensated by something pleasing or agreeable, the thought, in that case, tho' false, may be considered as a jeu d'esprit, and pleases us almost as much as if it had been true. An instance of this we have in the following epigram :

Blaise voyant à l'agonie  
Lucas qui lui devoit cent francs,  
Lui dit, toute honte bannie,  
C, à payez-moi vite, il est tems.  
Laissez-moi mourir à mon aise,  
Répondit foiblement Lucas.  
Oh ! parbleu vous ne mourrez pas,  
Que je ne sois payé, dit Blaise.

Thus englished :

When *Gripus* saw *Lubin* resigning his breath,  
And knew he should lose fifty pounds by his death,  
He accosted the wretch without pity or shame ;  
“ Come, pay me my debt—’tis high time—you’re to blame”.  
Oh ! let me but peaceably die, *Lubin* said ;  
“ Nay, you die not, cry’d he, till my money is paid”.

The falsity of this thought is evident, and to that it owes all its merit.

Hyperboles in an epigram are generally cold and spiritless, witness that famous one of the Greek, who said, that *Diana* had neglected the care of her temple, and suffered it to be burnt, being wholly taken up with attending *Olympias* while in labour with *Alexander the Great*.



A thought so cold, said a certain critic, that it might have extinguished the flames of the temple. Two hyperboles as extravagant the one as the other. But this figure is somewhat excusable, if it is accompanied with wit and delicacy; as the following one of Martial's, lib. i. ep. 90.

*Garris in aurem semper omnibus, Cinna,  
Garris & illud teste quod licet turbâ.  
Rides in aurem, quereris, arguis, ploras,  
Cantas in aurem, judicas, taces, clamas,  
Adeone penitus sedet hic tibi morbus,  
Ut sæpe in aurem, Cinna, Cæsarem laudes?*

All loose thoughts, tho' not absolutely gross or filthy, carry with them the stamp of a vulgar mind, and bad education, and therefore ought to be banished the epigram. We have numberless instances of this kind, which for the sake of decency we shall spare the reader.

In short, there is scarce any species of writing that abounds with more faults, than this of the epigram, and that for several reasons. In the first place, it is here, that the commencing poet first tries his wings. In the next place, as the whole merit of an epigram frequently depends on particular circumstances, consequently, a change in these must make it appear cold and languid. In the last place, the greater number of writers, in this way, are wholly indebted to art in their compositions. They turn and wind a  
thought

thought all ways, they confound or disguise the sense; and when, by a long course of metaphysical management, they happen to strike out something like a flash of wit, they fancy themselves authors of a pretty conceit. But true epigrams are not made in this manner. They should be founded on good sense, seasoned with a nice salt, and diversified by agreeable turns: now all this requires genius, wit, and a natural gift, to be met with only in the CHOSEN FEW.

## CHAP. III.

Of the MADRIGAL SONNET, RONDEAU, and  
TRIOLET.

**T**HES E four short poems are generally ranked with the epigram, being, in common with it, no more than an interesting thought, delivered in a happy manner. They are distinguished from each other, only by the nature of the thought itself, or the adjustment of the verse.

The madrigal is distinguished by the nature of the thought. The epigram may be soft, genteel, biting, satirical, &c. but it must be smart. The madrigal, on the contrary, is always to have a soft and pleasing point, with only so much smartness as is requisite to keep it from being flat. Its simplicity lies rather in the turn than the thought; which has always a flowery wit. The following madrigal, written by Pradon, has

has generally been looked upon as an example in this kind of writing. It is in answer to a person who had sent him a very witty letter.

*Vous n'écrivez que pour écrire :*

*C'est pour vous un amusement.*

*Moi, qui vous aime tendrement,*

*Je n'écris que pour vous le dire.*

*Thus englished :*

*You write for writing's sake alone :*

*Perhaps you've nothing else to do !*

*For me who love you, I must own,*

*I only write to tell you so.*

There is wit in this madrigal, and yet only so much as is necessary to enliven the sentiment. The turn is delicate, simple, and soft. This is the whole of what is required in a madrigal.

The sonnet is a short poem consisting of fourteen verses, and requires so many qualities to make it good, that there is hardly one in a thousand deserving of commendation. Boileau tells us, that the god of verse himself has fixed the exact measure, number, and cadence, forbidding a weak verse ever to intrude, or one word to appear twice in the same piece.

So much for the natural form of the sonnet.

But there is, besides this, an artificial form, which depends on the disposition and quality of the verse. This poem is generally to consist of

two quatrains, and as many tercets. The quatrain is a four-lined stanza of alternate verse.

The two first verses of the tercet rhyme together, and the disposition of the four last is arbitrary.

The famous sonnet of Mr. Des Barreaux is so much a masterpiece in this kind, that it naturally offers itself here as an example :

1. *Quatrain.*

Grand Dieu, tes jugemens sont remplis d'équité.  
Toujours tu prends plaisir à nous être propice.  
Mais j'ai tant fait de mal que jamais ta bonté  
Ne me pardonnera qu'en blessant ta justice.

2. *Quatrain.*

Où, Seigneur, la grandeur de mon impiété  
Ne laisse à ton pouvoir que le choix du supplice.  
Ton intérêt s'oppose à ma félicité  
Et ta clemence même attend que je périsse.

1. *Tercet.*

Contente ton désir, puisqu'il t'est glorieux :  
Offense-toi des pleurs qui coulent de mes yeux :  
Tonne, frappe, il est tems, rends-moi guerre pour  
guerre.

2. *Tercet.*

J'adore en périssant la raison qui t'aigrit.  
Mais dessus quel endroit tombera ton tonnerre,  
Qu'il ne soit tout couvert du sang de Jésus-Christ ?

This little poem is extremely beautiful. It has a chain of noble ideas, expressed without affectation



affectation or constraint, and the rhymes are introduced with grace and propriety.

The chief character of the rondeau is simplicity; it allows of that blunt and free manner of expression, which we may naturally suppose to have been in use with our forefathers, before manners and language arrived at the degree of elegance and refinement they are in with us.

The rondeau consists of thirteen verses, of which eight have one rhyme, and five another. The first burthen is placed after the eighth verse, and the last concludes the piece. Besides this, there must necessarily be a pause at the fifth verse. This is the exact rule for the rondeau. The following one is itself an example of these rules:

*Ma foi c'est fait de moi : car Isabeau*

*M'a conjuré de lui faire un rondeau :*

*Cela me met en une peine extrême.*

*Quoi ! treize vers, huit en eau, cinq en éme !*

*Je lui ferois aussi-tôt un bateau.*

*En voilà cinq pourtant en un monceau.*

*Faisons-en huit en invoquant Brodeau,*

*Et puis mettons par quelque stratagème,*

*Ma foi c'est fait.*

*Si je pouvois encor de mon cerveau*

*Tirer cinq vers, l'ouvrage seroit beau.*

*Mais cependant me voilà dans l'onzième,*

*Et si je crois que je fais le douzième,*

*En voilà treize ajustés au niveau.*

*Ma foi c'est fait.*

The burthen should always have a connection with the preceding thought, and, at the same time,

time, terminate the sense fully and naturally: it pleases most when it is used in an equivocal sense, so as to convey two different ideas under the same words.

The triolet is another species of the rondeau; its chief beauty consists in making the repetition of one thought a part of another; as for example:

Le premier jour du mois de Mai  
Fut le plus heureux de ma vie.  
Le beau dessein que je formai,  
Le premier jour du mois de Mai,  
Je vous vis & je vous aimai.  
Si ce dessein vous plut, Silvie,  
Le premier jour du mois de Mai,  
Fut le plus heureux de ma vie.

*Ranchin.*

Thus englished:

Of all my life, the happiest day  
Was the charming first of May!  
What fond schemes I form'd of love,  
On the charming first of May,  
If Silvia did those schemes approve,  
On the charming first of May,  
When I gave my heart away,  
Of all my life the happiest day,  
Was the charming first of May.

Nothing can be more soft and natural, notwithstanding the rules for this kind of writing are so very severe; and in this consists its greatest merit.

These

These two last kinds of poems are, in a manner, peculiar to the French; we having little or nothing of the kind in English, but what is included under the general title of SONG: and, indeed, the difference between an English SONG and an English EPIGRAM is very little, if any. I know of none but the length, which may, perhaps, make some. In my opinion, every small copy of verses, which is, or may be set to music, goes by the name of song; but then the general practice is to make it conclude in a point like an epigram; indeed it sometimes happens, that more than one thought is pursued in a song; but, if the critics be right, that is as much a fault there, as in an epigram; and the difference they make is, that a song consists of one thought, without a point, and if it extends farther, becomes a ballad; while an epigram has a right to a point, but, if it enlarges its number of conceits, must be called stanza's, or madrigal, or a copy of verses, or any thing you please. These are little niceties, which are not at all necessary to a man of good sense; he will presently see what is right, without them; nor, indeed, are the minute rules of either of these kinds of poetry important enough, to make a scrupulous inquiry into them worth his while.

The duke of Buckingham has given rules in verse for making songs; which, added to what has been here said, will enable every one to judge

judge as well of an epigram or any other small poem:

Tho' nothing seems more easy, yet no part  
Of poetry requires a nicer art :  
For as in rows of richest pearl there lies  
Many a blemish, that escapes our eyes,  
The least of which defects is plainly shown  
In some small ring, and brings the value down ;  
So songs should be to just perfection wrought,  
Exact propriety of words and thought,  
Expression easy, and the fancy high,  
Yet that nor seem to creep, nor this to fly ;  
No words transpos'd, but in such order all,  
As, tho' with care, may seem by chance to fall.

The sonnet has not been used by any writer of eminence, in the English language, since Milton.

After having treated of all the kinds of poetry, with their different species, it will not be amiss to imitate, in this place, the conduct of some of our modern historiographers, who, after they have planned and executed their narrative agreeable to the rules of art, present the curious reader with some authentic pieces, as vouchers for the truth of the facts they have related. The original institutes of all the polite arts are in nature. But it is universally allowed, that no author has given so full and just a transcript of them, as Horace in his Art of Poetry. This work is in general esteemed the code of reason and good sense, in what respects the arts. Therefore, if



it shall appear, that the principles we have established, in this work, are all of them to be met with in that celebrated performance, by giving a comment on it, we shall reflect new lights on what we have already advanced.

## A COMMENT

### On Horace's Art of Poetry.

**B**EFORE we enter upon this subject, it will be proper to stop a little, and take with us some necessary ideas, relating to the manner on which the arts were formed.

Whoever undertakes to explain the art of poetry, must naturally expect to be asked, what an art is, how the arts are formed, what are the different kinds of them, and under which of these poetry is ranked.

An art is a collection, or body of rules, shewing how to do that well which may be done either well or ill; for that which can be done only in one or other of these two manners, does not require the assistance of art.

Now these rules are no other, than many general principles drawn from several observations, verified by repeated trials. For example, it having been found, that an orator always displeased his audience by beginning his discourse in an insolent or overbearing manner: hence came the rule,

rule, that every exordium should be modest. Thus every observation includes a precept, and every precept arises from an observation.

Necessity was the first inventor of arts. It is the most ingenious of all masters, and its lessons are, of all others, the most readily attended to. Man, as is observed by Lucretius and Pliny, being at his birth thrown naked on the naked earth, exposed from without to the attacks of cold, heat, and damps, and the action of other bodies, and solicited from within by the urgent calls of hunger and thirst, could not long remain inactive; he found himself obliged to seek for means to remedy these inconveniencies; having found them, he improved them, so as to make them of more lasting and certain use in case of future need.

Thus, for example, when he had experienced the inconveniencies of being exposed to rains and damps, he sought for a place of shelter. If he met with this under the shade of a large tree, he would then consider, that he might make this still more serviceable, by twisting or interweaving its branches with one another, and with those of other trees which were near it, so as to form a spacious and commodious covering for his family, provisions, and flock; thus, in process of time, by repeated observations, and the assistance of industry and taste, (which were daily adding new improvement, either for strengthening or beautifying these first rude essays) a

chain of precepts were formed under the name of architecture, which is the art of erecting strong, commodious, and decent dwellings.

The same observations likewise extended to every thing that related to the means of preserving life, and of rendering it more convenient and agreeable; and hence arose the mechanic arts.

The necessities and conveniencies of life being provided for, there required but one step to attain the pleasures and delights of it. For as conveniency is the mean betwixt necessity and pleasure, being no other than an easy necessity void of care and trouble, so pleasure seems to be only a greater degree of conveniency.

The pleasing arts, then, are those which we may dispense with without being unhappy; but which, when they once are known, give a greater relish and sweetness to life. These are formed chiefly for taste and pleasure, and are painting, poetry, and music.

Thus the object of all arts being either to serve or delight, the utility or delight of society, hence arises a two-fold distinction of the arts, into those of use, and those of pleasure.

The arts are all founded on nature, the great storehouse where the Creator has laid up every provision for the life of man.

There are two methods by which we draw them from thence. The first is, by employing  
nature

nature herself, and making her subservient to our purposes in the manner we find her : this is the object of those we call the mechanic arts. The second method is, by merely imitating nature in what she has done, or does actually do ; and this is the view of the polite arts.

Poetry is one of the polite arts : (see vol. I.) consequently, the art of poetry must be a collection of precepts for imitating nature, in such manner as to please those for whom the imitation is made.

Now, to please in works of imitation, we must, 1st, make a proper choice of the objects to be imitated. 2dly, We must imitate these objects perfectly. 3dly, The manner by which we express this imitation, must have all the degrees of perfection it is capable of. But in poetry this expression is by words ; then the words of poetry should be as perfect as possible. And all the rules in Horace's Art of Poetry have a view to these three objects.

Of these, the two first are common to all arts of imitation : consequently, whatever Horace has said on that subject, is equally applicable to music, dancing, and painting. And indeed, as eloquence and architecture borrow some things from the polite arts, it may, in some degree, belong to them likewise. As for the third article, if we consider the rules separately and apart, they belong solely to poetry, as rules for colouring do to painting, for sounds to music,



and for gesture to dancing. But the general rules, and fundamental precepts of expression are still the same. The arts, whatever method they employ to express themselves by, must always do it in a just, clear, easy, and delicate manner: therefore, the general precepts for poetic elocution are the same as for music, painting, and dancing, and differ only in what essentially belongs to the words, sounds, gestures, or colours. This is the extent of the art of poetry, and in particular of Horace's; as that author often goes back to the principles, to give his readers a clearer and more certain insight into his subject, and to shew them a greater number of things at once, where they happen to have an understanding capable of comprehending them.

## The TRANSLATION

### Of Horace's Art of Poetry.

#### I.

“**S**HOULD a painter take it in his head  
 “ to place a human face on a mare's neck,  
 “ and join limbs from beasts of different kinds,  
 “ cover-

#### ARS POETICA.

Humano capiti \* cervicem pictor equinam  
 Jungere si velit, & varias inducere plumas,

\* We have rendered this by *human face*, and not a *man's face*. The poet is here speaking of a woman's head: *mulier formosa superne*. A man's head upon a mare's neck would make an ugly figure; but the face of a beautiful woman there would have a much more extravagant appearance.

Undique

“ covering the whole with the feathers of various  
 “ birds, in such manner, that, being above a  
 “ beautiful woman, it should end in a hideous  
 “ fish; if admitted to see this fantastic piece,  
 “ would you be able to keep from laughter?

“ Believe me, my Pisos, this is exactly the picture  
 “ of a book where the ideas are vague and con-  
 “ fusedly jumbled together, like the dreams of a  
 “ disordered brain, and where neither head, feet,  
 “ nor any one part concurs to form a regular whole.

“ But painters, you will say, and poets, have  
 “ always had the privilege to attempt whatever  
 “ they pleased.

M 4

“ I know

---

Undique collatis membris: ut turpiter atrum  
 Desinat in piscem mulier formosa superne:  
 Spectatum admitti \* risum teneatis amici!  
 Credite, Pisones †, isti tabulæ fore librum  
 Per similem, cujus, velut ægri somnia, vanæ ‡  
 Finguntur speciei: ut nec pes, nec caput uni  
 Reddatur formæ §. Pictoribus atque poetis

\* *Spectatum admitti.*] Taken from the custom of painters, or sculptors, to expose a statue or portrait when finished, and to publish that it might be seen on such a day. At which time, great numbers of spectators used to come and view it.

† *Pisones.*] Horace writes to the young Pisos, and their father, or, as others pretend, only to the children. Lucius Piso, their father, was consul with Drusus Libo, in the year of Rome 738. He was a confidant of Augustus, who gave him the governments of Rome and Thrace. By what Horace says of him, he appears to have been a man of taste.

‡ *Vanæ speciei.*] Ideas of things that do not subsist together in nature, and are only to be met with in the empty brains of sick men, mad men, or bad poets.

§ *Uni formæ.*] Of the same nature or kind. *Formæ* signifying the species composed of genus, difference, and properties.

Quidlibet

“ I know it, and frankly give and take the same  
 “ liberty ; yet not so as to join what is savage  
 “ to what is mild, birds with serpents, or lambs  
 “ with tigers.

“ Often, after a lofty beginning, that pro-  
 “ mises great things, we are amused with the  
 “ description of a grove, an altar of Diana, the  
 “ the wild meanders of a stream gliding through  
 “ pleasant fields, the Rhine, or rain-bow, like  
 “ purple patches in a garment that make a great  
 “ show : but then they are not in their proper  
 “ place. You know, perhaps, how to paint a  
 “ cypress ; but will this answer his expectations,  
 “ who hires you to draw him in the midst of a  
 “ ship-

Quidlibet audendi semper fuit æqua potestas,  
 Scipius : & hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim,  
 Sed non ut placidis coeant immitia : non ut  
 Serpentes avibus gementur, tigribus agni.

Inceptis gravibus plerumquæ, & magna professis  
 Purpureus, latè qui splendeat, unus, & alter  
 Affuitur pannus : cum lucus, & ara Dianæ \*,  
 Et properantis aquæ per amœnos ambitus agros,  
 Aut flumen Rhenum, aut pluvius describitur arcus.  
 Sed nunc non erat is locus. Et fortassè cupressum  
 Scis simulare. Quid hoc, si fractis enatat exspes

\* *Cum lucus, & ara Diana.*] Diana, goddess of the woods, had altars raised there to her. Horace here speaks of the wood and altar of Aricia, said to have been built by Orestes, who there consecrated the statue of Diana Taurica, which, when he killed king Thoas, he brought out of Scythia. The poets thought this and the Rhine fine subjects for descriptions, and never let them escape them. Roscœm.

Navibus,



“ shipwreck, floating, without hope, upon one  
 “ of the planks of his broken ship? You begin  
 “ a large urn, the wheel turns round, and forth  
 “ comes a diminutive pitcher! in fine, what-  
 “ ever subject you chuse, be careful to preserve  
 “ simplicity, and unity of design.

The greater part of poets are commonly de-  
 “ luded by a seeming excellence: this ye know,  
 “ illustrious parent, and ye sons worthy such a  
 “ fire! I affect brevity, and become obscure;  
 “ or, by polishing too much, destroy the spirit  
 “ and fire of my work. He who aims at the  
 “ sublime, runs into bombast; and he who too  
 “ cautiously avoids bombast, servilely creeps upon  
 “ the ground: in like manner, the poet who  
 “ would vary, in some extraordinary way, a sub-

M 5

ject

Navibus, sere dato qui pingitur? amphora cepit

Institui: currente rota\* cur urceus exit?

Denique sit † quodvis simplex duntaxat, & unum.

Maxima pars vatum, pater, & juvenes patre digni,

Decipimur specie recti. Brevis esse laboro,

Obscurus fio. Sectantem lævia nervi

Deficiunt, animique, Professus grandia turget:

Serpit humi, tutus nimium ‡, timidusque procellæ.

Qui variare cupit rem prodigialiter unam;

\* *Currente rotâ.*] The potter's wheel, which he turns about to give a form to his vessel.

† *Quodvis.*] Whatsoever you attempt.

‡ *Tutus nimium.*] That is, *qui tætet se nimis*, one who is over cautious and fearful. Horace's expression seems to be borrowed from birds, who creep on the ground when the winds and storms make them afraid of rising in the air.

Delphinum



“ject that ought to be quite simple, paints  
 “dolphins on trees, and boars in the middle of  
 “the waves. Thus the fear of erring, without  
 “judgment and art, is apt to lead us into still  
 “greater errors.

“The meanest workman in the *Æmilian*  
 “square can grave the nails, or imitate the  
 “easy flowing hair; yet, upon the whole, his  
 “statues are wretched, because he knows not  
 “how to finish his work in just proportion.  
 “Were I to bestow labour upon any work, I  
 “would no more imitate such a one, than I  
 “would wish to appear in public, remarkable  
 “for my fine black hair and eyes, but disfigured  
 “by a wry nose.”

Horace, at his first setting out, lays down the most general and necessary rules, on which all the rest are founded; which is, the simplicity and unity of the subject, in the disposition, the ornaments, and style. But, as these rules are

*Delphinum sylvis appingit, fluctibus aprum.*

*In vitium ducit culpæ fuga, si caret arte.*

*Æmiliûm circa ludum faber imus \* & ungues*

*Exprimet, & molles imitabitur ære capillos:*

*Infelix operis summâ, quia ponere totum*

*Nesciet. Hunc ego me, si quid componere curem,*

*Non magis esse velim, quàm pravo vivere naso*

*Spectandum nigris oculis, nigroque capillo.*

\* *Faber imus.*] Without going far for the sense of this passage, which has so much puzzled commentators, we may take it in general to signify the *meanest*, or *least skilful* workman. One who may give a great deal of grace and easiness to hairs, and finish the nails admirably, and yet not be able to make the whole of a statue.

concealed

concealed under the garb of allegory, we shall take off the disguise, and present them in their proper form.

And, in the first place, let us inquire what is unity in a body composed of different parts? It will, I believe, be found to lie in the exact relation and proportion of the several parts which go to form one complete whole, that is, a whole wherein nothing is wanting, nor is there any thing too much.

A whole therefore, is one, when there is a relation and proportion between the nature or quality of the parts, and the grandeur of those parts; when there is the same relation between the form and the foundation, and that all the parts, external and internal, have an equal degree of perfection. This is the extent that Horace seems to give to unity in the passage before us, and which contains the following principles :

*That the several parts should be made to match with one another.* To set this precept in a clearer light, and render the faults committed against it the more obvious, the poet gives us an example of its contrary in an extravagant picture, whose several parts he thus describes : The head and face of a beautiful woman upon the neck of an horse, with one foot of a goat, and another of a tiger, the body of a bird, and a fish's tail. Join these parts together in one body, and you will make a monstrous figure of it. Hence it may be concluded, that these

these several parts are not made to tally, or suit with each other. Nature is the model for all combinations : art ought to imitate her, and every artist should govern himself by her example. If he does sometimes go a little out of the road, and produce any monstrous unions, we are to look upon them as errors to be avoided by the artist, and the genius that should attempt to copy her in this, would betray a distempered imagination and a disordered judgment.

*Artists are allowed great licences, but then these have their limits.* These limits are found traced in the exemplar of nature they copy from. The artist may unite in his fictions what he finds separated from truth, and separate what is united in it. He may transpose, extend, or contract some parts ; but in all this he must follow nature as his guide. He must not pretend to paint islands flying in the air, as they are not found so in nature : or if, thro' pure indulgence, we grant him the licence of feigning such things, in the sporting of his imagination, if he builds towns there, or raises plants, yet must he not carry this licence so far, as to tell us the roots of trees grow upwards, and the branches below ; or that every single house is larger than the whole town. This would be as bad as to tell us, that serpents coupled with birds, and lambs with tigers.

In what then consists the licence of poets ? It consists in clearing the subject they treat from every



every thing that is likely to displease in it, and in adding every thing that can render it agreeable, without being obliged to confine themselves to truth. They are to take so much from truth as suits their purpose, and the rest they may supply with fiction. And, provided the parts, feigned, or real, have a proper relation with each other, and all together form one whole, that has the appearance of nature, this is all that is required of them. Here genius does not transgress its bounds.

*The form should be one.* You begin in a grave and reserved strain, and, on a sudden, you launch out into descriptions only proper for a young man. Instead of a compact and uniform texture, it appears full of fringes and patch-work, ornaments like a slip of purple on a piece of cloath, which may look handsome indeed, but is quite out of place and character : *Nunc non erat his locus.* There wants uniformity.

*Every thing should arise from the subject.* The subject is the center of unity. You may know how to draw a portrait ; but here the business is to reason, and prove by argument. But you play upon antitheses : if the father, the deliverer of his country is dead, you should melt into tears, and, instead of that, you amuse yourself with flashes of wit.

There is always some side in an artist stronger than another. Horace advises not to give too much



much way to this. The person who is dextrous at argumentation, is for ever arguing. With the man of wit, every thing is witty; and one of a sprightly imagination makes a picture of his whole work. But it should be considered, whether the subject requires this; and, if it does not, the artist should have resolution enough to give up the point, and sacrifice his darling theme. We ask for waves, he should paint us waves and not trees.

*A proportion should be observed in the parts.* This Horace means by the vessel which is begun in a manner to give hopes of something grand and magnificent, and ends at last in a sorry earthen pitcher. By this we may understand either a pompous exordium, which has a mean and low conclusion; or a noble front to a sorry building; or, lastly, pride which promises great things at setting out, and ends in nothing. Therefore, these lines regard the strain of the work, which should be always uniform; the proportion of parts between themselves, as to their extent; and, lastly, the proper manner of introducing one's self to the public at the head of a work.

Before we come to the two other precepts regarding the unity, it will be necessary to explain the word *simplex*, which Horace joins to *unum*. *Simplex dumtaxat et unum.*

*Simplex*, taken in a general sense, signifies the opposite to *duplex*, or *multiplex*. It may likewise signify

signify either *one subject*, or a *subject not complicated*; i. e. that when a subject is not too much crowded with incidents, and that the action may be easily kept in view, it may then be called simple; and, in this sense, unity and simplicity are two different things. Thus we may say that Corneille's *Heraclius* is one, and not simple, because the plot or intrigue is very complicated. And by the same reason that his *Horace* is simple, and not one, because the plot unravels easily, and the hero's combat is one action, and that his sentence, after having killed his sister, is another action. This sense is in itself very just. But it does not seem to be that of *Horace* in this place, who introduces a sort of general principle between what he has already said, and what he is going to say further on the head of unity: so as that this principle may serve at once as a consequence of what has preceded, and a foundation for what is to follow it. In this light we shall find *simplex* to have nearly the same signification as *unum*; and that both these words mean no more, than that every work of art should be free from any thing that is likely to break in upon the unity.

*The fear of being too uniform often carries an author into the ridiculous and the monstrous.* Before he comes to his precept, on the agreement of unity with variety, the poet, in this place, lays down one general principle, viz. that the greatest part of poets are often deluded by a  
 seeming

seeming excellence. This he proves by several examples, which, by the poetic art, he makes so many rules for eloquence, tho' only introduced to serve as proofs to the following rule: That unity should be preserved even in variety; i. e. that the parts, tho' varied, should have a due relation of uniformity between one another. Thus all the fingers of one hand are different, and yet resemble each other. Horace reasons thus upon it: Nothing is more easy, than to exceed or fall short of the exact point of perfection in this rule. For example, an author, by too nicely revising and polishing his work, enervates it: *sectantem lævia nervi deficiunt*. In the same manner, one who has a mind to vary his subject, thro' an apprehension of tiring his reader by a too exact uniformity, is apt to run into a wild marvellous that becomes monstrous, *prodigialiter*. Now this extreme is to be avoided. There are real beauties within our reach, all existing in the subject we are handling. All that is required is discernment to perceive them, and art to put them in play.

This maxim, *the fear of committing one fault often throws us into another, for want of proper art*, is a proposition which has only a general relation to unity. It is a kind of first principle. By the latter part of it he means, that an artist often runs into opposite extremes, when he follows only his own taste and talent, without being guided by rules, or, in other words, by a know-



knowledge of the observations made at different times on that kind wherein he is employed, and of those which the artists of his own time furnish him with, relating to the faults of the particular subject in which he is engaged.

The last precept on unity relates to the finishing each part. In a work of art the whole should be perfect, otherwise one perfect part joined to another that is imperfect would break the uniformity. Here the parts no longer appear made for one another, but bear the stamp of duplicity. Like a fine eye with an ugly nose. There are very few arts in which a single person is capable of finishing the parts in an equal degree of perfection. He who charms us in a panegyric, is cold and lifeless in a moral discourse. Phidias painted majesty, Apelles the graces. But, in a great work, both the one and the other are to be painted, and that equally well.

But now let us collect all these unities into one point of view, the better to distinguish their different kinds and degrees.

One single whole and not two: this is numerical unity. Horace supposes this to stand in no need of a precept. If he describes it, it is only by the simple word *simplex*, joined to *unum*.

One single nature and not several: this is the specific unity. A woman's head set upon a horse's neck breaks this unity.



One single form which takes in every thing without inequality ; one colour ; one tone : this is uniformity.

One single principle, from which every thing that is said arises : this is the uniformity of the subject.

One single common measure for the extent and proportion of the parts : a large head suits ill with a small body ; this is the unity of proportion.

In variety itself, a relation of uniformity founded on the unity of the nature and proportion : this enters into the specific unity.

Lastly, Every part is to be equally finished ; without which, it will appear more or less separated from the rest, nearly in the same manner as pieces of different shades : this is the unity of the finishing.

This passage is the richest and most important in Horace's Art of Poetry ; and the rules it includes are equally applicable to eloquence, architecture, and all other polite arts.

“ But ye who write chuse a subject suited to  
“ your strength and genius, and consider well  
“ with

---

*Sumite materiam vestra qui scribitis equam  
Viribus, & versate diu quid ferre recusent,*

Quid

“ with yourself, what your shoulders can or cannot bear. Where a good and just choice is made, eloquence and method will never fail,

“ The excellence and beauty of method (or I am much deceived) lies in this, to know when to say what the present necessity seems to demand, and to reserve a great part of what appeareth even pertinent to another time.

“ The author of a poem that has long raised the expectations of the public, ought to be very careful and judicious in the choice of incidents.”

Let us go over these precepts again. *Chuse a subject proportioned to your strength.* This is a very necessary piece of advice, especially to the poets, who, when once they have executed some middling performance, immediately extend their views to the most lofty subjects. But it is necessary to turn the kind and subject they propose to engage in over and over, they should try how well they can bear its weight, and for how long time, and whether they can go on with it or no.

Quid valeant humeri, Cui lecta potenter erit res,  
Nec facundia deseret hunc, nec lucidus ordo.

Ordinis † hæc virtus erit, & venus, aut ego fallor,  
Ut jam nunc dicat jam nunc debentia dici,  
Pleraque differat, & præsens in tempus omittat.  
Hoc amet, hoc spernat promissi carminis auctor.

† *Ordinis.*] This word may be taken in an active sense for the art of arrangement, or disposition.

An imagination may furnish out one act, which cannot compass three, much less five.

A man who has made choice of a subject of which he is perfectly the master, supports it with ease : he disposes the parts in a clear manner, and just as he pleases. He renders the thoughts by expressions which rise under his pen. On the contrary, when the subject is too powerful for the author, that the matter comes too thick upon him, and masters him ; when the ordering of the parts is displeasing and constrained ; the whole work will be weak and poor, like those sickly plants, where the stalk is too slender, the leaf pale and small, and the blossom almost faded before it is blown.

But in what consists the disposition of the parts in a poetic whole, either of the epic, or dramatic kind ? Is it like that in a history ? Are there not other ways to be found to render it more pleasing, and productive of a better effect ? This is answered by Horace in these three verses : *Ordinis hæc virtus erit, &c.*

There is some difficulty in this passage. I think it ought to be explained in the following manner, and always upon the principle of imitation, as the source and explication of all the rules.

Suppose an insurrection happening in a town, followed by an engagement between the adverse parties, the inhabitants run one after another to be



be spectators of the affair. The sight does not begin for them till the instant they arrive on the spot; and, from that instant, they inform themselves eagerly, by their own eyes, of all that they are capable of learning by themselves; afterwards, when they find a little respite, or they can learn no more from their eyes, they begin to inform themselves of the rest, that is to say, of the causes and circumstances, and these are told them by others. Here we have a model of poetical order. But to apply.

The comedy of the *Hypochondriac* (a) is to be performed. We suppose him in his own room, looking over his apothecary's bill. We do not see him as yet. Presently the door opens, or, what answers to it, on the stage, the curtain draws up, and then we see him. Let him continue to do what he was doing, or to say what he would have said, supposing the door not to have been opened: *Jam nunc dicat*. Let him speak upon first being discovered, in the same manner as he would have spoke, *jam nunc debentia dici*, supposing him not to have been discovered. But who is this man? What is his character? Has he any children? How does he bring them up? This you will know at a proper opportunity, which the poet will find means to prove, *præsens in tempus omittat*.

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(a) A play of Moliere's.



The same disposition takes place in a poem of the narrative kind. Virgil opens the scene with Æneas's departure from Sicily. But Æneas had left that coast six years before, this we do not know as yet, we come in as spectators, at the instant of his departure: *Vix è conspectu Siculae*. Let us follow him. A storm rises; he is thrown upon the coast of Carthage: he makes some stay there: during which time he relates his adventures to a princess who, luckily for us, is curious to learn them. The poet lays hold on this occasion, *præsens tempus*, to instruct us in all that happened before his hero left Sicily; and, under the pretext of entertaining Dido, satisfies our curiosity. This is an artifice that has been employed a thousand times by the poets.

*The author of a long poem*; for thus we would chuse to render *promissi*. For there would need no choice if the poem had no title; which would be nonsense. Whether a work has a title or not, the author has no right to load it with every thing that comes into his fancy. In a short poem, as the epigram, or madrigal, there is not so much choice to make; we must leave out every thing, or put in all.

*Hoc amet, hoc spernat*: admit some, reject others. The poet here makes use of the general term *hoc*, to let us know, that this choice is to be carried to all the parts, great and small. There must be a choice observed in the incidents,

dents, circumstances, thoughts, turns, words,  
and harmony.

### III.

“ Great delicacy is required in the making or  
“ introducing new words. If he does it at any  
“ time, he must take especial care to accompany  
“ them with others that may fully explain the  
“ sense of them. (a)

“ But if, perhaps, there is a necessity to in-  
“ vent words intirely new, to express things not  
“ known before, in this case, he is at liberty to  
“ frame new terms unknown to our ancestors ;  
“ and such a licence, managed with discretion,  
“ will never give offence : nay, these newly  
“ coined words will be well received, if they  
“ are originally Greek, and latinized by a slight  
“ alteration. For is it to be supposed, that the  
“ Romans would refuse to Varius and Virgil a  
“ liberty they had granted to Plautus and Cæ-  
“ cilius ? And why should I be envied the  
“ right

(a) In verbis etiam tenuis, cautusque serendis.

Dixeris egregiè, notum si callida verbum

Reddiderit junctura novum. Si fortè necesse est

Indiciis monstrare recentibus abdita rerum ;

Fingere cinctutis non exaudita Cethegæ

Continget, dabiturque lætitia sumpta pudenter,

Et nova fictaque nuper habebunt verba fidem : si

Græcò fonte cadant, parcè detorta. Quid autem

Cæcilio † Plautoque dabit Romanus, ademptum

Virgilio Variorum ? Ego cur acquirere paucæ

† Cecilius and Plautus ] two Latin poets, who wrote comedies.

“right of acquiring a few new terms, when  
 “when both Cato and Ennius enriched their  
 “native language in this manner? It has been,  
 “and always will be allowed us to coin new  
 “words, if they are distinguished by the cur-  
 “rent stamp.”

*An author should have the art to fix the sense of the new words he invents, by the others which accompany them.* This is the proper construction in the Latin: *Si callida junctura reddiderit notum verbum novum.* This line can have no other sense. A new word which first makes its appearance, having no signification of its own, is in the case of a person who enters into a company where no one knows him; he stands in need of somebody to introduce him. A new word, then, requires to be accompanied with such others as have some affinity to it, and serve to explain it. Thus, when the word *urbanity* was first made use of, the expression must have run in this manner, that *urbanity*, that *politeness* which characterises, &c. Here the word *politeness* explains that of *urbanity*.

*If they are originally Greek.* For, Greek being a language known to most of the Latins, a

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Si possum, invidetur, cum lingua Catonis, & Enni  
 Sermonem patrium ditaverit, & nova rerum  
 Nomina protulerit? Licuit, semperque licebit,  
 Signatum praesente nota producere nomen.

word



word derived from the Greek was but half new to them.

*And latinised by a slight alteration.* Thus from the Greek μηχανή, the Latins made their *machina*, from μηχανή mater; which shews by how slight an alteration a Greek word might be made a Latin one.

*It has been always allowed to coin new words.* But to whom? To necessity, I believe, and to that alone. But which way does this necessity make itself known? The sequel shews.

Words are like men, and whatever is the work of mens hands, subject to the different vicissitudes of fate. (a)

## IV.

“As the forests yearly change their leaves;  
“the first fall, and new ones spring up in their  
“place: just the same is it with words; the  
“more ancient by degrees are forgotten, new  
“ones spring up, and flourish with all the orna-  
“ments of youth. We are all doomed to obli-  
“vion, both we and our works. The spacious  
“ports, formed by the hands of kings them-  
“selves, to protect their stately fleets from the  
Vol III. Part II. N stormy

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(a) Ut sylvæ foliis pronos mutantur in annos:  
Prima cadunt; ita verborum vetus interit ætas;  
Ex juvenum ritu florent modò nata, vigentque.  
Debemur morti nos, nostraque: sive receptus  
Terræ Neptunus classes Aquilonibus arcet,



“ stormy north winds ; the vast marshes that for  
 “ whole ages lay useless, or only served to bear  
 “ a few small barks upon its surface, but now  
 “ feel the heavy plough, and nourish the neigh-  
 “ bouring towns : or those rivers, whose courses  
 “ changed are taught now to glide along a better  
 “ channel, nor longer hurt the rising grain by  
 “ their inundations. All the works (I say) of  
 “ mortals shall perish ; How then can we hope  
 “ that the honour of language can long subsist,  
 “ or words always retain their grace and beauty ?  
 “ Many terms now out of use shall revive, and  
 “ many now in vogue sink into oblivion ; if  
 “ custom will have it so : custom, the sovereign  
 “ arbitrator of language.”

Here Horace plainly proves, that as old  
 words are subject to decay, and drop into obli-  
 vion, it is allowable to make new ones in their  
 stead. For, if the most solid works are liable to  
 perish, how much more will things which de-  
 pend only on particular customs, or a kind of  
 fashion, be exposed to change and alteration ?

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Regis opus: sterilisque diu palus, aptaque remis  
 Vicinas urbes alit, & grave sentit aratrum:  
 Seu cursum mutavit iniquum frugibus amnis,  
 Doctus iter melius: mortalia facta peribunt;  
 Nedum sermonum stet honos, & gratia vivax.  
 Multa renascentur, quæ jam cecidere cadentque,  
 Quæ nunc sunt in honore vocabula; si volet usus,  
 Quem pæpes arbitrium est, & jus, & norma loquendi.

If

If we must lose then, we must likewise endeavour to repair our loss.

In all these things custom is the arbitrator, *arbitrium*; judge, *jus*; and rule, *norma*. These three words are in no wise synonymous. When there is any difficulty relating to the words, then custom decides it, *arbitrium*. When any thing is to be rejected with an absolute authority, then it gives the sentence, *jus*. It is the custom, and there is no reply to be made. Lastly, when laws and rules are to be established, or abrogated, it is still done by custom, which, in that case, is the law itself, *norma*. But this judicial sovereign, and legislative custom, is found only among those who have had a good education, and been always brought up in places remarkable for being the source of the greatest purity of language. (a)

## V.

“Homer has taught us in what kind of verse  
“we should sing of bloody wars, and the exploits of kings, and great captains.

“The unequal measures of elegy were, at  
“first, appropriated to complaints and tears, but  
“afterwards were employed also to express the

N 2

“joys

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(a) Res gestæ regumque, ducumque, & tristia bella

Quo scribi possent numero, monstravit Homerus.

Verbis impariter junctis querimonia primùm;

Post etiam inclusa est voti sententia compos.

Quis

“ joys of conquest, and success in love. As to  
 “ who was the author of the lesser elegiac verse,  
 “ grammarians dispute about it, nor is the con-  
 “ test yet finally decided.

“ Rage and resentment first armed Archilo-  
 “ chus with iambics. Comedy and tragedy  
 “ both adopted this kind of verse, as fittest for  
 “ the discourse; and what seemed framed to  
 “ drive forward an action, and surmount the  
 “ the tumultuous noise of the crowd.

“ The lyre, so wills the muse, celebrates  
 “ the gods, and the offspring of the gods;  
 “ praises the victories of a wrestler, or swiftness  
 “ of a courser that has gained the prize, and  
 “ tunes the soft cares of melting youth, and the  
 “ gay frolics of the ruddy Bacchus.”

Quis tamen exiguos elegos emisit auctor,  
 Grammatici certant, & adhuc sub iudice lis est,  
 Archilochum proprio rabies armavit iambo\*.  
 Hunc socii † cepere pedem, grandesque cothurni ‡;  
 Aternis aptum sermonibus, & populares  
 Vincentem strepitus, & natum rebus agendis.  
 Musa dedit fidibus divos, puerosque deorum,  
 Et pugilem victorem, & equum certamine primum,  
 Et juvenum curas, & libera vina referre.

[*Archilochum armavit iambo.*] This poet was the first who wrote well in iambics, whence that kind of verse took its name from him. His satire was so keen, that several of those whom he lashed in it, are said to have hanged themselves for vexation.

† *Socii.*] The *Sock* was a sort of Rat shoe or sandal worn by the comic actors.

‡ *Cothurni.*] The *buskin* was a high-heeled shoe used by the actors in tragedy, to raise the height of the hero, or principal character.

After

After having considered the things and words, Horace comes now to speak of the verse, and its different kinds; and shews, that each kind of writing has its particular measure and feet.

The hexameter verse is for heroic subjects: Homer has set us the example: *Quo numero*. By number, *numerus*, the Latins understood what we call *feet*, or else *measure*, or, lastly, the *cadence*. This word has all the three senses. The spondee is the slowest of all other feet, but then it is dull and heavy. The dactyle is lighter, on account of its two short syllables. There are only these two kinds of feet employed in the hexameter; for, if the anapest was to be introduced, it might by chance happen, that four short syllables would follow each other, *viz.* the two last of the dactyle, and the two first of the anapest. Therefore it is of no small consequence to the dignity of the verse, to observe a choice in the feet made use of. *Numerus* signifies, likewise, the length or measure of the verse. In the hexameter it consists of twelve feet: this measure produces a noble and majestic effect: we shall speak of this more at large in the next volume. Lastly, the cadence of the hexameter, being formed by a spondee, has every requisite to make it solemn, and, at the same time, emphatic. The dactyle gives life to it, and the spondee supports it by the help of its two long syllables.



*Unequal distichs: versus impariter juncti.* These are the pentameter verses interwoven with the hexameters. Horace calls them *exiguus elegos*, either because they are shorter and more light than the hexameter, or because they have not the majesty of that verse. With the Latins, the sense of the phrase always ends at the second line; but the Greeks did not look upon this as a rule.

*The sock and the buskin adopted the iambic.* *Soccus*, the sock of comedy; *cothurnus*, the buskin of tragedy. The iambic is composed of one short, and one long syllable. It has a very quick movement, from the frequent succession of the long and short syllables. It commands attention. The short syllables being very lively, and when connected with the long ones, strike forcibly on the ear. It is the fittest for conversation of any, from the ease and smoothness of its numbers, being not much different from the ordinary way of speaking.

*The lyre celebrates gods, heroes, &c.* The matter of the ode is purely sentimental, as we have shewn under that article.

This teaches us that every species of writing has its peculiar form of versification. But Horace goes in this still further, and, having spoken of the different forms and colours that the heroic, the lyric, or the dramatic verse gives to a poem, he proceeds to the colour of the style, which has its differences likewise. There is the simple style,

style, the familiar, the level, and the lofty style. Moreover, these three stages have each their degrees: and the distinguishing mark of a good poet is to know how to lay hold on their exact point of perfection, and to adapt to each subject the style which properly belongs to it. Horace proceeds to give a few lessons on this head in the following lines. (a)

## VI.

“If I know not how to preserve this difference of characters, and give to each work its proper colouring, why am I honoured with the name of poet? Or why, thro’ a blameable diffidence, do I chuse to remain ignorant, rather than venture to dive into the art?

“A comic subject will not admit of the pompous lofty numbers of tragedy; nor will the bloody supper of Thyestes bear to be told in simple verse, like those of comedy. Let every subject have a style and ornaments suited to it-  
N 4 self.

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(a) Descriptas servare vices, operumque colores,

Cur ego, si nequeo, ignoroque, poeta salutor?

Cur nescire, pudens prave, quam discere malo?

Verbis exponi tragicis res comica non vult.

Indignatur item privatis, ac propè socco

Dignis carminibus narrari cœna Thyestæ †.

Singula quæque locum teneant sortita decenter.

† *Cœna Thyestæ.*] Thyestes, the son of Pelops, who eat his own children, whom his brother Atreus caused to be served up to him at supper.

Interdum

“self. Sometimes however, it happens that co-  
 “medy raises its voice, and Chremes enraged  
 “speaks in a high strain of indignation. Tra-  
 “gedians too lower their style, and lay aside  
 “state to express their griefs. Telephus and Pe-  
 “leus oppressed with poverty, and banished  
 “their native home, must lay aside high senti-  
 “ments and heroic language, if they want to  
 “move the spectators to pity by their com-  
 “plaints.”

*The different style and ornaments of these several poems should be distinguished.* There are four kinds of style in a work, 1st, the kind of style, 2dly, The style of the subject in that kind, as approaching either to comedy or tragedy, and in what degree. 3dly, The style of the parts : each part of the subject has its own peculiar style, over and above that common to that subject : thus, one scene is more lofty and animated, another more soft and tender. 4thly, The style

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Interdum tamen & vocem cômœdia tollit :

Iratusque Chremes † tumido delitigat ore.

Et tragicus plerumque dolet sermone pedestri.

Telephus ‡ & Peleus, cùm pauper, & exul uterque,

Projicit ampullas, & sesquipedalia verba ;

Si curat cor spectantis tetigisse querellâ.

† *Iratusque Chremes.*] Chremes is the name of an old man in Terence's *Héautontimorumenos*.

‡ *Telephus et Peleus*] Two princes, who, having been driven out of their dominions, came to beg assistance in Greece, and went about dressed like beggars.

proper

proper to each thought, and idea : all the parts, however minute, have a character proper to themselves, and which is to be distinguished and preserved, and this makes the poet ; without this, *cur ego poeta salutor ?* The audience may often applaud a tragic verse in a comedy, and a lyric one in a tragedy ; and the verse itself may be very beautiful ; but it is not in its proper place.

*However, comedy may sometimes raise its voice, and tragedy descend a little.* This is very just. But, tho' it may be allowed to comedy now and then to take a flight, yet it must never assume the buskin. We never meet with an instance of this in Moliere. He always throws in some shades of the comic, to hinder it from being wholly tragical. On the other hand, tragedy must never sink so low as to become comic. Let any one read that inimitable scene, where Phædra is shewn in all the height of despair and grief. The style, tho' broken, and dejected, if I may use that expression, still shews it to be a queen that complains. (a)

## VII.

“ It is not enough that poems are beautiful,  
“ they must also be affecting, and bend the mind  
“ of the hearer every way, by inspiring them

N 5

“ with

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(a) Non satis est pulchra esse poemata ; dulcia suntu,  
Et quocunque volent, animum auditoris agunto.



“with the requisite passions. As it is natural for  
 “men to laugh with those that laugh, it is no  
 “less so to weep with those that weep. If you  
 “would have me shed tears, you must first shed  
 “them yourself; then shall I be touched with your  
 “misfortunes, O Telephus, or Peleus. But, if  
 “you act not up to your true characters, I shall,  
 “assuredly, either laugh, or fall asleep.”

The beauty of all poetry lies in its exact agreement with the matter and object it would express; this is called by Horace *descriptæ vices*: where we plainly trace the original in the copy, where every object has its just and true colouring given to it. But it is not sufficient that the tragedy be well drawn, and finely painted, unless they are likewise animated by sentiment; *i. e.* unless they are affecting: *Non satis est pulchra esse poemata, dulcia sunt.* This is a law, and pronounced in all the authoritative tone of a legislator, *sunt.*

But how are we to make our poem? There are two methods of doing this. The first is, that the actor who plays any part should, by his action and expression, shew himself to be moved with the passions he would inspire, and appear

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Ut ridentibus arident; ita flentibus adsunt.  
 Humani vultus. Si vis me flere, dolendum est  
 Primum ipsi tibi: tunc tua me infortunia lædent,  
 Telephe, vel Pelen: male si mandata loqueris,  
 Aut dormitabo, aut ridebo.

absolutely

absolutely in the state of the person he represents. This is so essential a point, that your audience will fall asleep, if your expression is dull and insipid; or, if it be false, the contradiction between that and the words and actions will turn all you say into burlesque and ridicule.

The second method is, to use a style conformable to the situation of the person who is speaking, and that his outward appearance may speak who he is. (a)

## VIII.

“ Afflicting words agree best with a dejected  
 “ look; threats come well from one in anger;  
 “ mirth and pleasantry from a facetious temper,  
 “ and grave sober remonstrances from a severe  
 “ rigid character. For nature begins betimes in  
 “ forming the mind to be differently affected, ac-  
 “ cording to the vicissitudes of fortune: it pushes  
 “ us on to anger and resentment, or sinks under  
 “ a load of woe, and then teaches the tongue to  
 “ utter the feelings of the heart.”

Here we have Horace's opinion concerning the source of the pathetic in a discourse. Nature

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(a)

Tristia maestum  
 Vultum verba decent: iratum, plena minarum:  
 Ludentem, lasciva: severum, seria dictu.  
 Format enim natura prius nos intus ad omnem  
 Fortunarum habitum: juvat aut impellit ad iram:  
 Aut ad homum mœrore gravi deducit, & angit:  
 Post effert animi motus interprete lingua.

has

has endowed all of us with a certain sentiment, which watches over the preservation of our being. This informs us what may hurt or benefit; and prompts us to desire or avoid them accordingly. This sentiment manifests itself first of all by the looks and gestures. *Vultu*, (which signifies here the same as the countenance, or what we call the air, a gay air, a sorrowful air.) It next breaks forth by the tongue, which is the interpreter of the countenance. The style should wear the same dress with the sentiment, and always be of a piece with the deportment of the speaker. *Tristia mœstum vultum verba decent*. This character of the style consists in a happy choice of well-turned phrases, and a proper use of figurative expressions, such as the apostrophe, interrogation, exclamation, &c. For by these figures it is that the style is rendered affecting and pathetic.

*Nature has formed our countenances susceptible of different impressions, according to the different changes of our fortunes.* This is what makes the art of declamation so important a study. There is a natural expression in the tone of voice and action for every possible situation of the human soul; and every man has the models of these in himself: therefore, when the actor deviates from these, every one is sensible of his error. As on the contrary, when he fills the whole of them, he is sure of meeting with universal applause. This Horace himself tells us:

IX.

(a) "If you express yourself in language that is not suited to your fortune, you will become the jest of the people and knights.

"There is a great difference between the language of a valet and a hero; a sage old man, and one in all the heat and vigour of youth; a lady of rank, and an assiduous nurse; there is the same between the merchant who wanders thro' the world in search of treasure, and the peaceful cottager who tends his little flock in humble retirement; between the Assyrian and the Colchian, and an inhabitant of Thebes, or a citizen of Argos."

After having laid down the principle, that every actor should speak in a manner suitable to his condition; the poet next proceeds to shew how this condition may vary, according to the difference of age, quality, sex, profession, country, or education. He mentions only a few

(a) Si dicentis erunt fortunis absona dicta;  
Romani tollent equites, peditesque cachinnum.  
Intererit mulum Davusne loquatur, an heros;  
Maturusne senex, an adhuc florente juventa  
Fervidus; an matrona potens, an sedula nutrix;  
Mercatorne vagus, cultorne virentis agelli;  
Colchus, an Assyrius\*; Thebis nutritus, an Argis.

\* Colchus, an Assyrius.] The people of Colchos were noted for cruelty and ferocity; those of Assyria for their luxury and effeminacy; the Thebans were ignorant and brutal; and those of Argos polite and proud.

branches



branches of this division, and leaves the rest to be understood.

But supposing I am to describe a country which I never saw, and know nothing of myself, how must I proceed? Listen to the bard : (a)

## X.

“ As to what regards the characters, in such  
 “ as are known, follow the voice of fame ; or,  
 “ if you feign new ones, be sure to make them  
 “ all of a piece. If you bring Achilles upon the  
 “ stage, paint him forward, fierce, inexorable,  
 “ and rash ; let him scorn all law, and claim  
 “ every thing by right of arms. Medea must be  
 “ bloody and inflexible ; Ino sink in tears ;  
 “ Ixion

---

(a) Aut famam sequere : aut sibi convenientia fingere.

Scriptor honoratum † si fortè reponis Achillem ;

Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer,

Jura neget sibi nata ; nihil non arroget armis.

Sit Medea ferox ‡, invictaque ; flebilis Ino §,

† *Honoratum*.] In this place has a Greek sense, and is an explanation of *τιμῆμος*, an epithet Homer always bestows on Achilles, and signifies *honoured* or *avenged*, those words having the same meaning in Greek ; for, vengeance once had, honour is restored. *Reponis, reponere*, to represent after another. Homer *posuit Achillem* whoever comes after him *reponit*.

‡ *Medea ferox.*] A wicked sorceress who married Jason, whom she followed to Greece, fearing to be overtaken by her father, who pursued them. She cut her brother Absyrtus in pieces, and strewed his limbs in the way to stop the pursuit. She poisoned the father and daughter of Jason, and two children she had by him, and then saved herself by flying through the air to Colchos, in a chariot drawn by two winged dragons.

§ *Flebilis Ino.*] Ino the daughter of Cadmus and Harmonia. Imagining herself a lioness, she killed her two children whom she took for young whelps ; and then in despair cast herself into the sea. Euripides wrote a tragedy on this story.

Persidus

“ Ixion perfidious ; Io must wander, and Orestes mourn.

“ If you write upon an unknown subject, and venture to strike out new characters, let them be consistent and uniform throughout. But, let me tell you, 'tis difficult to handle new subjects with propriety ; and you will find it better to draw your fable from Homer, than be the first to tread unbeaten paths. For what was originally writ by another, may be so turned and improved as to be justly accounted

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*Perfidus Ixion †, Io vaga ‡ ; tristis Orestes §.*

*Si quid inexpertum scenæ committis ; & audes*

*Personam formare novam ; servetur ad imum,*

*Qualis ab incepto processerit : & sibi constet.*

*Difficile est propriè communia dicere : tuque*

*Rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in ætus,*

*Quàm si proferres ignota, indiclaque primus.*

*Publica materies privati juris erit, si*

† *Perfidus Ixion.*] Ixion was the first murderer in Greece ; he killed his father-in-law on his wedding-day. Jupiter having received him into Heaven, the traitor fell in love with Juno, and would have ravished her, for which he was thrown down into Hell, where he was stretched up on a wheel which was perpetually turning. Æschylus and Euripides wrote on this subject.

‡ *Io vaga.*] Io, daughter of Inachus, whom Jupiter turned to a cow. Juno, out of jealousy, made her run mad, and sent a fly which so stung her, that she ran through many countries. Æschylus has wrote on this.

§ *Tristis Orestes.*] Orestes, the son of Agamemnon, killed his mother Clytemnestra, to revenge his father's death, whom she had caused to be murdered, for which deed he was tormented by furies. This story has been much used on the stage : *Scenis agitatus Orestes.*

Nec

“counted your own, if you are not solicitous to  
 “copy every trifle, or translate faithfully word  
 “for word : If, in fine, like a servile imitator,  
 “you don’t fetter yourself by such narrow rules,  
 “as to be entangled beyond a power to retreat,  
 “without violating all the laws of decency and  
 “composition.”

This is very a difficult passage, and requires an ample discussion.

*Follow report, or, if you make any thing new, be sure to let all the parts be of a piece.* This is the precept and rule which Horace has given us, as to what regards the characters in a poem.

There are but two ways of doing this, either by painting according to the common received ideas, or by substituting ideas of one’s own in their room.

To explain this clearly, it will be necessary to establish a fourfold distinction of worlds. 1st, the real world, or society of which we are a part. The historical world ; which is peopled with great names, and filled with celebrated actions. The fabulous world, which abounds with heroes and imaginary deities : and, lastly, the possible world, wherein all beings exist in a general man-

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Nec circa vilem, patulumque moraberis orbem,

Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere, fidus

Interpres : nec desilies imitator in arctum,

Unde pedem proferre pudor vetet, aut operis lex.

ner,

ner, and and from whence the imagination may create individuals, and give them all the characters and properties of real life. In this manner Aristophanes has drawn his Socrates, a subject taken from real life as it then existed. The Horaces (*a*) are taken from the historical world, Medea (*b*) from the fabulous, and Tartuffe (*c*) from the possible world. In the three first of these worlds the poet draws after common fame. In the fourth, he takes the whole from his own ideas.

*Follow fame.* Though the things you describe should be false in themselves, nevertheless, if the picture you draw of them is agreeable to the general received opinion concerning them, the public will be struck with the resemblance, and acknowledge that you have drawn a good picture. Horace says, Follow fame, (*famam sequere*) not follow truth. For truth, though truth, pleases us in the description given of it, only in proportion to the acquaintance we have with itself; for, without that, a beholder would not be able to judge of the degree of likeness between the copy and the original. We cannot take upon us to say that a picture is like a person we do not know,

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(*a*) Les Horaces, a tragedy of P. Corneille's, from which our English poet, Mr. Whitehead, has taken his Roman Father.

(*b*) A tragedy of Racine's.

(*c*) A comedy of Moliere's, from whence Cibber took his Non-Juror.

though



though it may be so in reality. For this reason, the poet need not to be so solicitous about the reality of his characters as the opinion of those who believe them real. This is the whole of what the poet has to do, with respect to the characters he takes from real life, history, or fable.

As to those characters which are the pure work of fiction, and concerning which the spectators themselves have no idea, Horace thus directs our practice : Distinguish your characters, once for all, by some particular stamp, and let them adhere invariably to this through the whole of your performance. From hence the spectator will form his judgment ; and your character will be true, not from its resemblance to an original, as it acknowledges none, either history or fable, but from the likeness it bears to itself ; so that, taken through the different scenes, it will be an original in the first, and a true copy in the subsequent ones.

Of these two methods, the first is, in Horace's opinion, much more easy than the second ; for *difficile est propriè communia dicere*, it is difficult to give a character of *individuality* to what has nothing of its own, but what is in common with others. For instance, how can I give A or B that character which properly belongs to him ? Is this person known ? When you tell me he is a man, I conceive him to have the essential parts of a man, that he is an animal endowed with  
reason :

reason : he has the essence, *communia*, which is common to every individual of the same species. But as he never existed, either in fable or history, he has no proper character by which I can distinguish him from the general class : *difficile est propriè dicere*. If I am told it is Nero, or Achilles, I instantly perceive not only the qualities which these two persons have in common with other men, but likewise their personal and characteristic qualities, *viz. cruelty and courage*. But on the contrary, had *Tartuffe* been named as a person two hundred years ago, it would have been said, this is the name of a man; but, as this conveys no proper characteristic of an individual with it, it would have been looked upon as a mere creature of the imagination, that had no distinguishing property of its own. But, since Moliere has given him a poetical existence in his play, he has acquired a character of individuality, and we say, *Tartuffe is an hypocrite*, as we say, *Nero is a cruel man*.

*Nero is a cruel man*. This passage can carry, I think, no other meaning with it. *Communia*, in good Latin, signifies general things, especially as being opposed to *propriè*, which signifies particular or personal things, or *individuality*, as we have said before. *Ferè communia generalia sunt*, says Quintilian, and, in the line before, *à communibus ad propria veniamus*. Besides, we may support this explanation; both by what went before and by what follows; for, as the whole pas-

sage is of the same nature, one part should be explained by another. It is much better, says Horace, to bring a known character upon the stage, than such as have never been spoken of, *indicta*; and with which we are entirely unacquainted, *ignota*: by this he means those beings which have only a possible existence, and never had an actual one.

Horace having been advising poets to chuse a hero already known in fable, he starts the following objection to himself: But then it will be said, this subject is the common property, every one knows it, therefore I shall give nothing new, nothing of my own. To which he replies:

There are two ways of making it your own: the first is, by not adhering too scrupulously to facts: the other, by giving an entire new turn to the thoughts and elocution.

Nec circa vilem, patulumve moraberis orbem,

Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere, fidus

Interpres. . . .

Horace speaks allegorically. He has been advising the poets to take their subjects out of Homer's poems, and is now cautioning them against the faults they might be guilty of. The first and most considerable is, to amuse themselves, *circa orbem vilem & patulum*, with a cheap circuit open to all the world; that is, with bringing into tragedy all the parts of Homer's poem, imitating his very connection and chain. But he tells them

them they should make themselves masters of their subject, and add, retrench, transpose, and order, as they find most proper themselves. And by this means, says he, you will make a subject your own, though another handled it before you. This is a licence claimed and practised by the dramatic poets of all ages.

And this licence is by so much the more necessary, because the drama has its rules by which the subject must be formed; and this must be expanded, contracted, and disposed, in such a manner, as to conform exactly to the form prescribed by those rules. And, if a poet abides too scrupulously by the circumstances of the history or fable, he will, to his shame, find himself obliged to abandon his work, though engaged too far to think of retreating, and yet it will be impossible for him to advance, being kept in and confined by the rules of the kind of poem. *Proferre pedem ex arde* means to get clear of an affair. Thus the stag in Æsop's fables (from whence our poet has taken his metaphor) having a mind to imitate the fox, jumped into a well, from whence he could not get out again; and this is taken from that fable. But this is not all, *proferre pedem* signifies also to advance: these two senses of the same word explain each other, and are sufficiently pointed out by the two nominatives *pudor* and *operis lex*. *Pudor vetat proferre pedem inde*: shame prevents you from extricating yourself from your dilemma. *Operis lex vetat proferre pedem inde*: the



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the

the rules of the work will not suffer you to go forward. So that you are in such a situation, that you can neither advance nor retreat.

The second way of making a subject one's own which has been handled by another before, requires little or no explanation. You need not be solicitous to give us word for word. Let us suppose a subject for a tragedy completely traced out in history, so that the poet, when he comes to work upon it, has not the least alteration to make, either in the action, the circumstances, or the conducting. Yet, if he furnishes, from his own imagination, the speeches, the thoughts, and the expressions, the subject becomes his own. Racine, in his *Esther*, has religiously made a point of keeping strictly up to the sacred history. But is that tragedy the less his on that account? Is he less the author of *Esther*, than of *Phædra*, or *Alexander*? The oratorical part of a poem is of too large an extent, and contains too great a number of things; that the poet who is able to furnish this from his own stock, is, in every sense of the word, a poet, creator, and inventor, though he does not furnish the other incidents. This is but invention at the second hand, it is true; but it is sufficient to give an air of novelty to an old matter, and make it the property of the author, though handled before by another writer.

## XI.

(a) "Do not begin like that impertinent poet  
 " of old : *I will sing the fate of Priam, and the*  
 " *ever memorable war.* What can be produced  
 " by so pompous a beginning ? The mountains  
 " labour, and bring forth a mouse ! How much  
 " better does he, who never foolishly raises our  
 " hopes too high ?

"Sing, muse, the man who, after the taking of  
 " Troy, travelled through many countries and cities,  
 " and narrowly observed their manners. He does  
 " not begin with a flash, and end in smoke, but  
 " out of smoke brings forth glorious light, and  
 " surprises

---

(a) Nec sic incipies, ut scriptor cyclicus \* olim :

*Fortunam Priami cantabo, & mobile bellum.*

Quid dignum tanto feret hic promissor hiatu ?

Parturient montes : nascetur ridiculus mus.

Quanto rectius hic, qui nil molitur ineptè ?

*Dic mihi Musa virum, captæ post tempora Trojæ,*

*Qui mores hominum multorum vidit, & urbes.*

Non fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo dare lucem

Cogitat : ut speciosa dehinc miracula promat,

\* *Scriptor Cyclicus.*] A Cyclic poet is, according to some interpreters, one who writes the whole life and actions of a hero in verse, as Nonnius in his *Dionysiæ* : however, to know the true meaning of the term is no kind of service here ; it is sufficient that we know Horace is speaking of some poet who wrote on the wars of Troy in verse, and set out in a very silly and extravagant manner.

Antiphatem,



“ surprises us with dazzling miracles : Antiphates,  
 “ Scylla, the Cyclops, and Charybdis.

“ He does not take the return of Diomedes  
 “ from the death of Meleager ; nor the story of  
 “ the Trojan war from Leda and her two eggs.  
 “ He always hastens to the end of the action,  
 “ and hurries his readers into the midst of  
 “ things, as if they were already known. He  
 “ passes over what he finds incapable of the  
 “ “graces

*Antiphatem†, Scyllamque‡, & cum Cyclope § Charybdim.*

*Nec reditum Diomedis ab interitu Meleagri ||.*

*Nec gemino bellum Trojanum orditur ab ovo ¶.*

*Semper ad eventum festinat : & in medias res*

*Non secus, ac notas, auditorem rapit : & quæ*

† *Antiphatem.*] Antiphates king of the Lestrigons, described in the tenth book of the *Odyssey*. They were cannibals, and Homer says, they carried away Ulysses's followers in strings like so many fishes.

‡ *Scyllamque & Charybdim.*] Scylla and Charybdis were two horrible monsters mentioned by Homer, *Od.* b. 2.

§ *Cum Cyclope.*] Polyphemus king of the Cyclops, who dwelt in Sicily, near the promontory of Lilybæum. 'Tis one of the most agreeable tales in Homer. See the 11th b. of the *Od.* His story is also told by Euripides in his satire called *The Cyclop*, and by Virgil in the 3d b. of his *Æneis*.

|| *Nec reditum Diomedis ab interitu Meleagri.*] This is a criticism upon the poet Antimachus, who, in his poem on the return of Diomedes, begins with the death of his uncle Meleager. Homer has not fallen into this error in his poem on the return of Ulysses.

¶ *Nec gemino bellum Trojanum orditur ab ovo.*] Horace laughs here at the author of the little *Iliad*, who began his poem with Leda's two eggs, in one of which Helen and Clytemnestra were inclosed ; in the other Castor and Pollux.

Desperat

“graces and ornaments of poetry, and invents  
 “with so much judgment, so artfully mixes  
 “truth and falsehood together, that the begin-  
 “ning, middle, and end, answer exactly to each  
 “other.”

The poet all along keeps the same object in view, and the rules laid down in the foregoing verses all respect dramatic poetry. But, by the art of the author, what is proper to be observed in an epic poem, becomes a model for what should be done in a dramatic one; and, in tracing to us the method followed by Homer in his works, he gives us the example of true perfection in all works of taste. Homer could not have been praised in a more elegant manner, nor could the example of art happily executed be shewn in a clearer or more instructive light. Let us, then, see how Homer has acted.

He sets out in a proper manner, *apte, non inepte*. There is not, says Cicero, any word in the Latin tongue more expressive than *ineptus*. A dissipated person (*ineptus*) is one who does not perceive what the nature of the present circumstance requires of him; who always says too much upon it; who is fond of showing himself; and has not a proper regard to characters; or,

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Desperat tractata nitescere posse, relinquit.

Atque ita mentitur, sic veris falsa remiscet,

Primo ne medium, medio ne discrepet inum.

in fine, one, who, in whatever kind of work he undertakes, either falls short of the point of perfection, or over-shoots his mark : such a one the Latins called *ineptus*, and we term a silly fellow. Now he must be silly that will set out with a pompous beginning, and not be able to keep up to it throughout the work : and, if it is easy to be kept up, it still shews silliness to set out with so much parade. This Cyclic writer, then, was silly for beginning his poem in this blustering strain :

“ Troy’s famous war and Priam’s fate I sing.”

It is much better to promise less and perform more, than to promise a great deal and do very little. Therefore a proper modesty should be observed in every exordium, and the same modesty should prevail in the things, the turns, the phrases, and, in short, throughout the whole narration.

*Not going back as far as Meleager’s death.* Our poet, a little higher, has shewn the proper manner of setting out in a poem : *Begin with what relates to the instant of the opening* : here he points out the exact point we are to set out from. A narration may go as far back as the first springs of an event, and give us the story of the two eggs which Leda conceived by Jupiter under the form of a swan, and from one of which sprung the fair Helen, whose rape occasioned the siege of Troy. History allows of this. But poetry has quite a different way of proceeding. She transports

transports herself into the midst of things, and begins in this manner: *Vixè conspectu Siculae, &c. Scarce had we quitted the coast of Sicily, when a furious tempest arose.* The poet, carried away by the deity who inspires him, finds himself in the place where the gods set him down. He forgets that his readers are ignorant of the preceding circumstances. And if some opportunity happens (which is seldom wanting) of informing them, they look upon themselves wholly indebted to chance for it, and not to the design of the poet.

*He passes over whatever he finds incapable of the graces or ornaments of his art.* There is no object which art cannot represent with success. But there are many which this or that particular artist cannot succeed in, because his talents do not answer to the extent of his art. When a poet finds this to be the case, and that his powers fail him, he should immediately quit the subject.

*He so aptly mixes truth with fiction in his fable, &c.* A little before he says, build, overturn, do every thing you please, provided the parts are congruous, and, taken all together, form one natural whole. When Moliere was writing his plays, there were a number of his acquaintance ready to furnish him with strokes of character from real life. These he grafted into his work, and that in so dextrous a manner, that the whole wore an uniform air of probability and truth. History may give the subject of a poem, nay, it may even furnish most of the incidents, as in Racine's



Esther. But if there are any irregular parts, or such as are too dry and tend to no principal point, it is allowed to substitute such feigned circumstances in their room, as will produce a more agreeable effect. But the main point is, to make these fictitious parts appear of a piece with the rest. (a)

## XII.

“ Hear now, attentively, what the people and  
 “ I expect from you : If you would have the  
 “ pleased spectator to stay till the curtain falls,  
 “ and the chorus comes to demand the accus-  
 “ tomed applauses, you must mind well how our  
 “ tempers change with our years, and give to  
 “ every season and stage of life its proper cha-  
 “ racter and beauty.

“ The child that has newly learned to speak,  
 “ and can walk without help, loves to sport  
 “ with his equals; is soon provoked and pleased,  
 “ and changes every moment.

“ The

---

(a) Tu quid ego, & populus mecum desideret, audi.  
 Si plausoris eges aulæ manentis \*, & usque  
 Sessuri, donec cantor, vos plaudite, dicat:  
 Ætatis cujusque notandi sunt tibi mores:  
 Mobilibusque decor naturis dandus, & annis.

Reddere qui voces jam scit puer, & pede certo  
 Signat humum, gestit paribus colludere: & iram  
 Colligit, ac ponit temerè: & mutatur in horas.

\* *Aulæa manere,*] Signifies to wait all the shiftings of the scenes, especially in those entertainments where there was machinery used.

Imberbis

“ The youth just from under the yoke of his  
 “ tutor, loves horses, hounds, and the exer-  
 “ cises of the Campus Martius : He is easily  
 “ inclined to vice, and impatient of reproof ;  
 “ slow to discern his true interest ; profuse,  
 “ proud, fond and inconstant.

“ Our riper years breed different inclinations ;  
 “ we study to acquire wealth, secure friend-  
 “ ships, and rise to honor and power ; we are  
 “ cautious of doing what may afterwards give  
 “ us cause to repent.

“ Old-age is compassed with many diseases  
 “ and wants ; it heaps up riches, and dare not  
 “ use them, does every thing with a cold timo-  
 “ rous distrust ; full of delays, slow to hope,  
 “ lazy, and fearful of futurity ; morose, surly,  
 “ fond of the follies of the past age, and an ill-  
 “ natured censor of the present.

## O 3

“ The

Imberbis juvenis, tandem custode remoto,  
 Gaudet equis, canibusque, & aptici gramine campi,  
 Cereus in vitium flecti, monitoribus asper,  
 Utilium tardus provisor, prodigus aeris,  
 Sublimis, cupidusque & amata relinquere pernix.

Conversis studiis, ætas, animusque virilis  
 Querit opes, & amicitias, inservit honori :  
 Commisisse cavet, quod mox mutare laboret.

Multa senem circumveniunt incommoda : vel quod

Querit & inventis miser abstinet, ac timet uti :

Vel quod res omnes timide, gelideque ministrat,

Dilator, spe longus, iners, pavidusque futuri,

Difficilis, querulus, laudator temporis acti

Se puero, censor, castigatoremque minorum.

Multa

“The flowing years bring many pleasures  
 “and advantages with them; but in the de-  
 “cline of life these all vanish and disappear.  
 “Be sure then to note what is probable and  
 “proper in every stage of life, that men may  
 “not have the weak anxieties of old-age, or  
 “boys the ambitious cares of men.”

This passage relating to the characters of each age, is partly taken from Aristotle, and is wrote with the utmost spirit and justness. It will be necessary to recapitulate the principal points; such at least, as seem to stand the most in need of explanation.

*Hear now attentively what the people and I expect from you.* Horace might, without vanity, propose himself as a connoisseur and dictator in the Art of poetry, since he had undertaken to form a system of rules for it. We may therefore take what he here says in the following sense: Hear what is expected from you, both by the people of taste, who are adepts in the art, and by those who are not. The learned and unlearned reader, and every one is alike desirous to see the characters proper to each age well expressed: *Notandi sunt tibi mores*: i. e. To be not only true in themselves, but to appear so; and

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*Multa ferunt anni venientes commoda secum;  
 Multa recedentes adimunt. Ne fortè seniles  
 Mandentur juveni partes, pueroque viriles:  
 Semper in adjunctis, ævoque morabimur aptis.*

that

that in a clear and perceptible manner. Nothing wins so much upon the audience, or so effectually retains them, as the manners being well-painted. They sit with pleasure, *sessuri*, so long as you present them with pictures in that taste.

Every age has its characters, and this again has its changes, progress, and decline, according to the years : This is what is meant by *mobilibus naturis*, *variable natures*, which are continually increasing and changing with the years : *Mobilibus* agrees equally with *naturis* and with *annis*.

In describing the manners of youth, the word *tandem*, *at length*, is very expressive for one who had long languished under his tutor's yoke. *Cereus in vitium flecti* : And is as pliable as wax to the impression of vice. Youth sooner receive the impressions of vice than those of virtue, because they are easily caught by appearances, and think they perceive a certain air of freedom and of liberty in vice. *Sublimis*, and are presumptuous, vain, and full of a false confidence, for want of experience in the world.

Tastes likewise change. At the years of maturity mankind are generally taken up with three objects, riches, honors, and friends. At this time of life a man is cautious in his proceedings, and fearful of advancing too fast, lest he should expose himself. *Inservit* is a term used by Horace to denote mediocrity.



Old-age finds itself encompassed with numberless diseases and wants. *Dilator*, it is dilatory, and does every thing with a cold and timorous distrust, which makes it always backward to engage in any new undertaking. *Spe longus*, incessantly hoping, and expecting that time, on which it places all its dependence, will bring about the event it wishes for. *Iners*, *sine arte*, lazy, and unwilling to exert itself. *Pavidusque futuri*, and cautious even to excess, as dreading, from a sense of its own weakness, to be some time or other in want of the necessities of life.

Horace has borrowed most of the strokes in this picture of the different ages of life from the following principle of Aristotle: That young men, who have not yet experienced the deceits of the world, are ready to believe every one; and old men, from having been frequently imposed upon, will scarcely believe any one. Those in the middle stage of life preserve a just mean between the manners of youth and old-age; because their experience is then in its middle state.

*The flowing years: Anni venientes.*---The construction of this passage runs thus: *The flowing years bring many pleasures and advantages with them, which, as they ebb back, anni recedentes, they take away from us again.* This passage will be best explained by the manner of reckoning the different stages of human life among the ancients.

Accord-

According to them, the highest period of a man's life is at fifty. Till thirty it is the growing age, *ætas crescens*; from thence to fifty the age of manhood, the settled age, *ætas constans*; beyond fifty they dated the decline of life, *ætas declivis*. Aristotle includes the whole in three words, *juventus, vigor, senectus*: Youth, manhood, and old-age. By this scheme, a man is continually receiving advantages till the age of fifty, and from thenceforwards he is losing them by little and little. Here the poet then is carefully to observe what is proper to every state, and not make Nestor speak like a young man, nor Ulysses like a child. Every age has its distinguishing character, and this the poet is to adhere to: *Semper in adjunctis ævoque morabimur aptis.* (a)

## XIII.

“ In plays, some things are acted, others  
 “ only told. What strikes the ear moves us far  
 “ less than what passes before the eyes, and  
 “ the spectator himself is made a witness of.  
 “ But you are not, on this account, to bring  
 “ upon the stage what ought to pass behind the  
 “ scenes; for many things are to be removed  
 O 5 “ from

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(a) Aut agitur res in scenis, aut acta refertur.  
 Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures,  
 Quàm quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus, & quæ  
 Ipse sibi tradit spectator. Non tamen intus  
 Digna geri, promes in scenam: multaque rolles

“ from the eyes of the spectator, which he will  
 “ afterwards learn better by a faithful and mov-  
 “ ing relation. Medea must not murder her  
 “ children before the people, nor Atreus prepare  
 “ his bloody banquet upon the stage. Let not  
 “ Progne be changed into a swallow, or Cad-  
 “ mus into a serpent. Whatever you thus pre-  
 “ sent that contradicts my sense, I hate and dis-  
 “ believe.”

*The subject is either exhibited or told.* There are but two ways of presenting a thing upon the stage. 1st, By exposing the thing itself to the view of the spectators, who are then instructed by their own eyes; or, 2dly, by relating the thing with its several circumstances, without exhibiting it; and then the ears convey the instruction. The first of these forms is *dramatic*, i. e. *active*; the other is called *epic*, or *narrative*.

Of these two forms the dramatic is the most lively and striking. Because what strikes the ear moves far less than what passes before our eyes. We readily trust the faithful sight: *Oculis fidelibus*; which, like a faithful mirror, gives back the image just as it received it, and whose testimony is therefore to be credited: and in the

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Ex oculis, quæ mox narret facundia præsens.  
 Nec pueros coram populo Medea trucidet :  
 Aut humana palam coquat extra nefarius Atreus :  
 Aut in avem Progne vertatur, Cadmus in anguem.  
 Quodcunque ostendis mihi sic, incredulus odi.

next

next place, because the imagination does by this means enjoy the impresson, without being obliged to exert any efforts, and forms what ideas it pleases of it ; whereas, in the other, it must be governed by those of the relater.

But, on the other hand, there are certain things which art cannot counterfeit so well as to impose upon the spectators. In that case, it becomes necessary to adopt the epic or narrative form, and say, for example, that the Horatii have fought with each other on the plain ; that Hippolytus has been run away with by his horses, and dashed to pieces ; that young Edward was inhumanly killed by the cruel Gloster, &c. So that sometimes there is a necessity of admitting the epic form into the drama : And, in return, the dramatic form is frequently introduced into the epopœia, to give it more force and fire. This we have remarked elsewhere (a).

However, (to give once for all a clear and definitive explanation of the different degrees of the epic and dramatic poem) we shall observe, that the drama of the theatre is much more finished than that of the epic. We hear Æneas speak on the stage ; and, indeed, we hear him also speak in Virgil's epic poem ; but then on the stage we likewise see the person of this hero, we behold his gestures, and his motions, as well

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(a) Vol. II.



as hear the sound of his voice ; whereas we only read his words in the poem. In the drama the narration at once employs our eyes and our ears ; the epic-dramatic only employs the imagination, which has nothing to work upon but the artificial signs which are given it, *i. e.* the words. Therefore, the narration in the drama is partly dramatic, because if we do not actually see the cruel Gloster striking the unhappy young prince on the mouth with his gauntlet, or behold the bloody soldiers plunging their daggers in his breast, we see Tyrrel in tears, and hear him relate the mournful tale, and his relation is become a kind of spectacle. In the epic-drama there is no more of the dramatic than the form of the actors discourse, which is direct. In a word, in the drama every thing is dramatic, even to the narrations themselves ; and, in the epic, that part of it which is dramatic is but partly so, since, of the three direct expressions, gestures, tone of voice, and speech, the latter only is properly so.

*We are displeased when the illusion is destroyed.* We do not like to be deceived by halves. It looks as if the poet had a mean opinion of our understanding. This makes Simon, in Terence, reproach Davus with having gone badly to work in imposing upon him : *O Dave, ita ne contemnor abs te ?* Ah Davus ! Davus ! do you take me for such a fool ? The trap is too gross.

In

In such a case we grow angry, and believe nothing we see or hear. *Incredulus odi.* (a)

## XIV.

“If you would have a play well received, and  
“often called for, let it consist of five acts,  
“neither more nor less. Never presume to in-  
“troduce a god, but where some business worthy  
“of a god requires it; nor confuse a scene by  
“bringing in a fourth speaker.”

*A play must have five acts.* In five acts there are four resting-spaces for the spectator, during a continuance of about three hours. This is an observation founded on the capacity of the human mind. An attention of one or two hours only does not afford sufficient matter of exertion to it. But, when this exceeds three hours, it becomes a kind of labor. Of these five acts, the first contains the exposition of the subject, and forms the intrigue; the three middle ones contain the several efforts used to unravel this intrigue; the last completes the unravelling. It was right to give a greater compass to that part which contains the efforts, than to the other. The intrigue interests us only by the pains that are required to unravel it; but, that once done, all our interest in the transaction ceases. Hence

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(a) Neve minor, neu sit quinto productior actu  
Fabula quæ posci vult, & spectata reponi,  
Nec deus intersit; nisi dignus vindice nodus  
Inciderit: nec quarta loqui persona laboret.

the drama consists properly in the effort that is made to execute a difficult enterprize.

*Never introduce the gods.* The intervention of deities should not be introduced into any enterprize; or, if it is, it should prevail through the whole of that enterprize. In this case, the drama becomes what we call *marvellous*. When a deity appears only at the latter end of the piece to unravel an intricate part, it betrays great want of power in either the poet or his hero, whose efforts are obliged to yield to the opposition. Nothing is more pleasing to the spectator, than to see a difficult enterprize happily surmounted by the sole efforts of human power. But, if the marvellous is looked upon as a certain fact by the spectators, then it is to be exhibited agreeable to the received opinion concerning it; and this way Euripides has, without offending against the rules of the art, represented Iphigenia as carried off by Diana, at the very instant she was going to be sacrificed. Notwithstanding which, I am persuaded, that, if there had been any other way of saving her equally bold, the Greeks would have been much better pleased with it.

*There should be only three speakers in one scene.* There may be twenty persons upon the stage at a time, but only three of these should speak, the others being considered as mutes. The monologue, or soliloquy, is generally tiresome, and offends against the rules of probability, especially if

if carried to any length. And the dialogue between two is apt to be monotonous; where there are three speakers, it forms a pleasing variety, but with four it begins to grow too broken and diffused. For example, two persons are in discourse, each defends his own opinion, a third interposes, and acts the part of a mediator between them. What then is there for a fourth person to say? Nothing, certainly, but what might as well have been put into the mouth of any one of the other three; and, of consequence, what he says might as well have been omitted. But, if such a person must be introduced and speak, let it be only by monosyllables, or very short sentences, and only by way of approbation to what is said: let him not force himself to speak, *ne loqui laboret.* (a)

## XV.

“The chorus should supply the place of an  
 “actor, and sustain a generous manly part:  
 “whatever is sung between the acts must some  
 “way conduce to the plot, and be aptly connected with it. ’Tis his business to declare in favor of the virtuous and good, to support warmly the interest of his friends, to calm the  
 “temper

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(a) Actoris partes chorus, officiumque virile  
 Defendat: ne quid medios intercinat actus,  
 Quod non proposito conducat, & hæreat aptè,  
 Ille bonis faveatque, & consilietur amicis,



“temper when discomposed, to love those that  
 “have a horror of guilt, to commend tempe-  
 “rance, impartial justice, a strict observance of  
 “laws, and peace, attended always with ease  
 “and plenty ; to keep, inviolably, the secrets  
 “he is entrusted with, and implore the gods to  
 “change the course of fortune ; that she may  
 “abandon the wicked, and fulfil the desires of  
 “the just.”

The antient drama had its chorus, *i. e.* a certain number of persons, who stood by the principal performers on the stage, and represented the spectators and witnesses of the action that was carrying on. These were old men, women, warriors, shepherds, satyrs, or gods, according to the nature and character of the piece. These choruses sang between the acts some short pieces of lyric poetry, and sometimes they joined in the scene. The coryphæus, or master of the band ; which is the meaning of the word *virile*, used by Horace in this place ; who, after he had said that a fourth person should not speak long together, adds, that, when the chorus speaks, it is to be considered as one of the actors.

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Et tegat iratos, & amet peccare timentes.  
 Ille dapes laudet, mensæ brevis : ille salubrem  
 Justitiam, legesque, & apertis otia portis.  
 Ille regat commissa : deosque precetur, & oret  
 Ut redeat miseris, abeat fortuna superbis,

*Let*

*Let the chorus sing nothing between the acts but what has some relation to the subject of the piece.* At its first institution, the chorus was not connected at all with the action : It was only a sort of hymn in praise of the god whose feast they were celebrating. But, when the drama became more a prophane than a religious representation, good taste got the better of custom ; and it was determined that the song between the acts should be no other than an expression of the sentiments which had been produced by the preceding scenes.

*And always declare in favor of the virtuous and good.* This is the character of the chorus ; considered as a personage, it must have a character ; and this is probity, and a love for virtue, peace, and justice. Mankind in general are lovers of justice. They may be vicious themselves, but they do not chuse others should be so : Therefore, whoever represents the public as the spectator of a good or bad action, ought always to represent it as approving what is innocent, and condemning what is guilty. The human heart, when divested of prejudice, always prefers good to evil. (a)

## XVI.

“ The flute used by our ancestors was not, as  
 “ now, adorned with brass, and the rival of  
 “ the

---

(a) Tibia non ut nunc orichalco viasta, tubæque

“temper when discomposed, to love those that  
 “have a horror of guilt, to commend tempe-  
 “rance, impartial justice, a strict observance of  
 “laws, and peace, attended always with ease  
 “and plenty ; to keep, inviolably, the secrets  
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(a) Tibia non ut nunc orichalco viasta, tubæque



“ the trumpet : But small, with few notes,  
 “ and of a shrill sound ; yet suited to the chorus,  
 “ and loud enough to be heard over a theatre  
 “ but moderately crouded. For the people were  
 “ not yet very numerous, the audience was thin,  
 “ and composed of modest, frugal, well-mean-  
 “ ing spectators.

“ But when, by conquest, they begun to en-  
 “ large their territories, and extend their city-  
 “ walls to a greater compass ; when on festivals  
 “ they spent the whole day without fear of pu-  
 “ nishment, in mirth and drinking ; then both  
 “ their music and poetry became more licentious :  
 “ for what else was to be expected from idle igno-  
 “ rant rustics mixing with the citizens ; a rude  
 “ unpolished race with a mannerly discreet one ?

“ Hence the players upon the flute studied to  
 “ improve their art by the ornaments of gesture  
 “ and luxury, and appeared upon the stage with  
 “ long

*Æmula, sed tenuis, simplexque foramine pauco,  
 Aspirare & adesse choris erat utilis, atque  
 Nondum spissa nimis complere sedilia statu.  
 Quò sanè populus numerabilis, utpote parvus,  
 Et frugi, castusque, verecundusque coibat.*

*Postquam cœpit agros extendere victor ; & urbem  
 Latior amplecti murus ; vinoque diurno  
 Placari Genius festis impunè diebus :*

*Accessit numerisque, modisque licentia major.  
 Indoctus quid enim saperet, liberque laborum,  
 Rusticus, urbano confusus, turpis honesto ?*

*Sic prisce motumque, & luxuriam addidit arti*

*Tibicen :*

“ long sweeping trains. ’Twas thus, too, that  
 “ in Greece new sounds were added to the  
 “ simple harp, and a rash unbridled eloquence  
 “ affected an unusual pomp of diction ; while,  
 “ under pretence of giving useful advice, and  
 “ predicting future events, their style differed  
 “ but little from that of the oracles delivered at  
 “ Delphos.”

After having spoken of the chorus which used to sing to the flute, it was natural, in the next place, to say something of that instrument itself, and the progress it had made from its first invention. *Tibia* is the name of one of the bones of the leg. The flutes being made of this bone, they took their appellation from thence. But sometimes they were made also of box, of elder, or only of a simple reed. At the first institution of theatrical representations, these flutes had a very sweet and shrill sound, *tenuis*. They played upon one only at a time, *simplex*: and that had but a few holes, *foramine pauco*. But, by degrees, they came to be lengthened, and made wide, and full at the end, like a trumpet, *tubæ æmula*: in the room of one there were now introduced two ; one for the right-hand,

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*Tibicen* : traxitque vagus per pulpita vestem.

*Sic etiam fidibus voces crevere severis :*

*Et tulit eloquium insolitum facundia præceps :*

*Utillumque sagax rerum, & divina futuri*

*Sortilegis non discrepuit sententia Delphis,*

which

which had a sharp or shrill sound ; another for the left, which was more full and mellow. The number of the flutes being thus doubled, that of their holes was doubled also. But what was the occasion of these changes ?

At first the theatre was but small, the people few in number, abstemious, and consequently modest and quiet ; so that there was no occasion for the flute that accompanied the chorus (who represented the people) to be shrill or piercing. *Tenuis, simplex, foramine pauco, aspirare choris erat utilis.* But when the stage came to extend its bounds, and the spectators to grow more numerous, less modest, and not unfrequently intoxicated with drink, there was a necessity for raising the pitch of the notes, and making the measure more exact : *Accessit numerisque modisque licentia major.* The numbers, or, what is the same thing, the modulation became more elegant and diversified, *numerorum licentia.* The song was more bold and lively, and there was a greater distance between the intervals, *modorum licentia.* A little lower Horace calls this *motum & luxuriam.*

The luxury, introduced into music, soon communicated itself to the decorations of the theatre. The persons of the chorus wore their robes with long trains. The very style of the chorus in tragedy forgot its primitive simplicity. The poets were carried away by an extravagant enthusiasm, and spoke in a language like a priest delivering oracles. And, indeed, there is nothing more

more difficult than the antient choruses, both in tragedy and comedy. It requires a sort of divine inspiration to be able to comprehend them. (a)

## XVII.

“The poet who disputed in tragic numbers  
 “for the trifling prize of a goat, soon after  
 “brought naked satyrs upon the stage, and,  
 “without departing from the majesty of tragedy, endeavoured to give pieces full of raillery  
 “and humor: For it was impossible, without some agreeable novelty, or extraordinary  
 “charm, to retain long a spectator just come  
 “from offering sacrifice, full of the fumes of  
 “wine, wild and ungovernable.

“But then it will be found requisite that  
 “these diverting satyrs be so introduced, and  
 “the

(a) *Carminē qui \* tragico vilem certavit ob hircum,  
 Mox etiam agrestes satyros nudavit: & asper  
 Incolumi gravitate jocum tentavit. Eò quòd  
 Illecebris erat, & grata novitate morandus  
 Spectator, functusque sacris, & potus, & exlex †.*

*Verum ita riores, ita commendare ‡ dicaces*

\* *Carminē qui tragico, &c.]* He who disputed the prize of the goat in verse, soon after shewed satyrs, a kind of monsters, half man and half goat.

† *Functusque sacris, & potus, & exlex.]* The three reasons for the invention of something to divert the audience. 1st, They offered a sacrifice, in which there was no want of meat or wine. 2dly, They drank chearfully at that festival. 3dly, They were for any thing frolic and extravagant. Roscom.

‡ *Commendare.]* May we not take this word in the sense of representing with: *mandare cum*, in the same manner as *adhibere*? And then *commendare* will be much the same meaning with *committere*.  
 Conveniet



“ the transition from serious to farce so artfully  
 “ managed, that the god or hero, who lately  
 “ appeared adorned in gold and purple, may  
 “ not descend to a low mechanic dialect, or, in  
 “ avoiding meanness, soar above the clouds with  
 “ empty notions. Tragedy should never debase  
 “ itself : or, if it must descend a little and  
 “ mix with satyres, it should always do it with  
 “ the same apparent confusion that would attend  
 “ a grave matron, who, in obedience to the  
 “ dictates of religion, dances on solemn fes-  
 “ tivals.

“ Were I a writer of these satyrical pieces, I  
 “ would not be too studious in affecting only  
 “ simple

Conveniet satyros, ita vertere seria ludo,  
 Ne, quicunque deus, quicunque adhibebitur heros,  
 Regali conspectus in auro nuper, & ostro,  
 Migret in obscuras humili sermone tabernas† :  
 Aut dum vitat humum, nubes, & inania captet.  
 Effutire leves indigna tragoedia versus.  
 Ut festis matrona moveri iusta diebus,  
 Intererit satyris paulum pudibunda protervis,  
 Non ego inornata, & dominantia nomina ‡ solum,

† *Tabernaria.*] *Tabernaria* were pieces so called from being acted in the taverns or drinking-houses and were the very lowest kind of comedy.

‡ *Dominantia verba.*] Calling every thing by its proper name. The satyrs were in general licentious, and gross, and full of abuse and scurrility ; this Horace takes notice of a little lower, and calls them *immunda ignominiosaque dicta*.

Verbaque,

“ simple and proper words ; nor avoid so far  
 “ the style and coloring of tragedy, that there  
 “ should be no difference between the manner of  
 “ Davus, or pert Pythias, who cozened old Simo  
 “ out of his money, and Silenus the governor  
 “ and companion of Bacchus. I would take  
 “ the plan of my poem from some known sub-  
 “ ject, and pursue it with that simplicity and  
 “ seeming ease, that any one might think him-  
 “ self capable of the same ; but, upon trial,  
 “ sweat much, and labor in vain : Such is the  
 “ force of method and connection, so capable  
 “ are the meanest and plainest things of orna-  
 “ ment and grace.

“ Satyrs, supposed to be bred in woods, ought  
 “ not (in my judgment) to sport in soft and ten-  
 “ der lays, like citizens trained up in all the  
 “ gaiety

---

Verbaque, Pifones, fatyrorum scriptor § amabo :

Nec sic enitar tragico differre colori,

Ut nihil intersit Davusne loquatur, an audax

Pythias, emuncto lucrata Simone talentum,

An custos, famulusque dei Silenus alumni.

Ex noto fictum carmen sequar : ut sibi quisvis

Speret idem : sudet multum, frustraue laboret

Ausus idem : tantum series, juncturaque pollet

Tantum de medio sumptis accedit honoris.

Sylvia deducti caveant, me iudice, Fauni,

Ne velut innati triviis, ac pene forenses

Aut nimium teneris juvenentur versibus unquam ;

§ *Satyrorum scriptor.*] The Latins gave the names of *satyrus* and *satyri* to dramatic satyres only ; the others, such as those of Horace and Juvenal, they called *saturae*.

Aut

“gaiety and politeness of Rome; nor express  
 “themselves in obscene and reproachful lan-  
 “guage. This displeases equally the knights,  
 “senators, and better sort of people, who do  
 “not always approve or honor what gains the  
 “applause of the mere vulgar.”

The explanation of this passage has a long while been a matter of great perplexity; but I think we meet with it pretty clearly illustrated in some of those Italian pieces which are at present so much the vogue among us; where, with a very little difference, we trace the characters of the antient satyr in the modern Harlequin. If we examine his mask, belt, and close-bodied jacket, which makes him look almost as if naked; his knees confined in his habit, and, as it were, turned inwards; we shall find nothing wanting but the cloven foot. Add to this the archness and activity of his tricks, the oddity of his style, his false witticisms, and the tone of his voice; which, all together, bear a strong resemblance to the manners of a satyr. The satyr of the antients resembled a goat. Our Harlequin is more like the cat: It is still a man disguised like a beast. But what parts did these satyrs act according to Horace? They played in the same scene with a god or a

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*Aut immunda crepent, ignominiosaque dicta.*

*Offenduntur enim, quibus est equus, & pater, & res:*

*Nec, si quid fricti ciceris probat, & nucis emptor,*

*Æquis accipiunt animis, donantve coronâ.*

hero

god or a hero, who were talking in all the pomp of language: in like manner Harlequin appears in company with Samson, and serves for a contrast to the hero of the piece: nay, sometimes he takes upon him to play the hero himself, and represents Theseus, Orestes, &c.

Fortunately, for the support of my conjecture, we have one (and that the only one) of the satyric pieces of the antients yet remaining: this is the Cyclop of Euripides. The *Dramatis Personæ* of this piece are Polyphemus, Ulysses, Silenus, and a chorus of satyrs. The action is the dangers in which Ulysses is, in the grot of Calypso, and the manner in which he extricates himself. The Cyclop is a character of insolence and cruelty, befitting none but the most savage brutes. Silenus is a droll in a malicious, satyrical, and even gross, vulgar manner. Ulysses is reserved and serious; but still, in some places, seems to give into the humor and buffoonery of Silenus. The chorus of satyrs maintains a sort of burlesque gravity, which sometimes becomes as coarse railery as that of Silenus. That part of it which is translated by Brumoi, is alone sufficient to satisfy any one who is curious on this head.

After what has been here said, it will be of little consequence to trace this spectacle back to its origin. Authors tells us, that it was at first very grave and serious. It is certain, that, in the time of Euripides, it was a mixture of the lofty and the low; of buffoonery and solemnity.



This kind of entertainment was first introduced by the Romans, upon their becoming acquainted with the Greek stage, as a diversion not only for the giddy populace, but even for the philosophers themselves, who were often furnished with matter of speculation from this odd contrast, however unnatural in itself. It is upon this system that I shall undertake to explain Horace on this subject, and do not in the least doubt but that I shall make every thing tolerably clear.

*The tragic poet introduced naked satyrs in his piece, and endeavoured to raise a laugh, but still preserved the gravity of tragedy.* Thus the hero of a tragedy, Ulysses, for example, preserves his gravity, *incolumi gravitate*; tho' a naked satyr was hung up before him, in his mask and cloven foot, while many of the spectators, who were half drunk, and pleased with any thing that was licentious, laughed immoderately at it. *Eo quod illecebris, &c.*

*The diverting and sarcastic satyrs . . . Risores & dicaces:* This is their true character: Laughing at every thing, however low and full of raillery, but always in a gross manner.

*Joining serious things with gay. Vertere seria ludo.* Ulysses talks in a grave manner, Silenus answers him by a joke: This is blanking what is serious, and substituting somewhat merry in its stead. *Vertere.*

*But be careful that the tragic hero.* Having given a definition of the satyrical drama, Horace  
next

next proceeds to lay down rules for the two different parts of which the representation consisted.

The actor, whether a god, a hero, or a king, who, either in a preceding wholly tragic piece, or in any scene of the same piece, had spoke in a lofty style, and was seen in gold and purple, *regali conspectus in auro & ostro*, should not sink afterwards into low or vulgar discourse, nor yet be always in the clouds. The reason of this precept is, that, as satyr consisted in a contrast of the serious and the comic, if the hero himself of the tragedy was to descend to a mean stile, this contrast would be destroyed. As, on the other hand, an immoderate and extravagant elevation of style would be wholly unintelligible. He then proceeds to show what is the proper style for the tragic piece, and illustrates it by the following beautiful comparison: A grave matron, who, in obedience to religion and custom, dances on a solemn festival, appears with a modest and decent air; but discovers some confusion, at seeing the eyes of every body fixed upon her, and hearing the remarks that pass on all sides. This is the model of what the tragic part should be.

He next comes to the rules for the satyric part. The satyrs are brought from the woods, *sylvis deducti*. Therefore must not be as artful as persons brought up in a town: *ne velut innati triviis ac penè forenses*. They are given to raillery

and pleasantry, *risores & dicaces* : But yet must not talk obscenely, nor be guilty of scurrility, or rudeness: *Ne immunda crepent ignominiosaque dicta* : For this will disgust every well-bred person. What then must be their style ?

If I was a writer of these satyrical pieces, says he, I would not give to the language of my satyrs the style and coloring of tragedy, for then I should destroy the contrast ; neither should they be altogether in the vein of comedy. Davus is too artful, and the pert courtesan, who cozens the old miser out of his money, is too cunning. This can never agree with the character of a Silenus just come from the woods, who was never in any other station than that of a guardian, and foster-father to an infant god. He should be simple and artless ; and this is precisely the style I should make use of, the common and familiar. Every one may think he could do as much, and that it is only to make them say the first thing that comes uppermost ; but here he will find himself mistaken, and that there is a secret merit herein, to which few can attain ; which is, to preserve the proper chain and connection in the things. *Tantum series juncturaque pollet*. It is easy enough to say a few words in a plain natural manner, but to maintain this style for any time, without becoming flat, leaving a gap in the subject, flying off into transitions, or making forced connections: to do this is, perhaps, the master-piece of taste and genius.

## XVIII.

(a) " A long syllable coming after a short,  
 " is called an iambus, a rapid foot; whence  
 " iambics have obtained the name of trimetres,  
 " tho' they consist of six regular feet. At first  
 " they were equal, and of a piece, consisting  
 " wholly of the pure iambus: Nor is it but of  
 " late, that to give them the greater weight, and  
 " a certain majestic slowness, they have pru-  
 " dently taken into partnership the grave spon-  
 " dees; yet so as not to yield the second or  
 " fourth places, which they still amicably retain.  
 " This modern iambus is seldom to be found in  
 " the so much boasted trimetres of Ennius or  
 " Accius. Their verses loaded with spondees,  
 " heavy and dull, betray a hasty careless perfor-  
 " mance, or, which is still worse, a downright  
 " ignorance of the rules of art. It is not every  
 P 3 " judge

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(a) Syllaba longa brevi subiecta, vocatur iambus,  
 Pes citus, unde etiam trimetris accrescere iussit  
 Nomen iambeis: cum senos redderet iectus:  
 Primus ad extremum similis sibi. Non ita pridem,  
 Tardior ut paulò, graviorque veniret ad aures,  
 Spondeos stabiles in iura paterna recepit  
 Commodus, & patiens: non ut de sede secunda  
 Cederet, aut quarta socialiter. Hic & in Acci  
 Nobilibus trimetris apparet rarus, & Enni.  
 In scenam missus magno cum pondere versus,  
 Aut operæ celeris nimium, curaqué carentis,  
 Aut ignoratæ premit artis crimine turpi.



“ judge that can pronounce well upon the har-  
 “ mony and cadence of verse, and the Romans  
 “ have been but too indulgent in that point.  
 “ But shall I, in hopes of the like gentle usage,  
 “ write in a loose rambling manner? Or, sen-  
 “ sible that my faults must be known to all,  
 “ should I not rather strive to avoid censure, and  
 “ take no greater liberties than what have been  
 “ already winked at in others? Yet, with all  
 “ this caution, tho’ I may meet with pardon, I  
 “ shall never merit praise. Do you, Pisoës, con-  
 “ sider well the Greek originals, study them  
 “ both day and night.

“ But our forefathers, you will say, were ta-  
 “ ken with the jokes and numbers of Plautus :  
 “ Nay, they admired them with too much pa-  
 “ tience, not to say folly ; if you and I may be  
 “ allowed to distinguish a genteel from a clown-  
 “ ish expression, or to have ears fine enough to  
 “ judge

Non quisvis videt immodulata poemata iudex :  
 Et data Romanis venia est indigna poetis.  
 Idcirco ne vager : scribamque licenter ? an omnes  
 Visuros peccata putem mea ? tutus, & intra  
 Spem veniæ cautus. Vitavi denique culpam ;  
 Non laudem merui. Vos exemplaria Græcæ  
 Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna.

At nostri proavi Plautinos & numeros, &  
 Laudavere sales : nimium patienter utrumque,  
 Ne dicam stultè, mirati ; si modò ego, & vos  
 Scimus inurbanum lepido seponere dicto,

“judge of the harmony and beauty of versification.”

*A short syllable followed by a long one.* Here the poet comes to speak of the verse of tragedy. He had given a hint of it in the eightieth verse, where he shows, that every species of poetry has its peculiar style, harmony, and numbers, and, consequently, its versification. The iambic verse is that which is most agreeable to the drama :

Hunc focci cepere pedem grandæque cothurni.

But what are the particular rules for dramatic verse ? And what are the qualities that render it perfect ? This he explains to us in the passage before us. The iambic is very swift; *pescitus*. It has one short and one long foot ; and the short one following upon the long one, gives it that, vivacity and swiftness : So that though it

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*Legitimumque sonum\* digitis callemus, & aure †.*

\* *Legitimumque sonum.*] Horace calls a regular measure and harmony a lawful sound. He has said elsewhere, *legitimum poema*.

† *Digitis callemus, & aure.*] Those who have a nice ear, when they hear good verse, beat time with their fingers or feet, like musicians. Terentianus *quam pollicis sonare, &c.* “The masters of the art are wont to mark the cadence by striking with the foot or finger.” The beating time with the foot is most ancient ; that with the hand was not known in Juvenal’s time : For, says his commentator on that verse of his, *audiat ille testarum crepitus* ; “they beat time with shells, like our castanets, when the pantomime is danced ; the masters of the chorus not beating then with their hands.” Roscom.

consists of four, six, or eight feet, yet it is called dimetre, trimetre, and tetrametre; because the measure being so very short, as having only two feet and a half; the two feet are joined together in scanning it, so that there is one measure in each division, *ex. gr.* instead of dividing the following verse,

*Bea | tus il | le qui | pro cul | nego | tiis.*

Tis divided into three only, *viz.*

*Beatus il | le qui procul | negotiis.*

Consequently, though these kind of verses had really six feet, and as such might properly be called hexameters, yet they are called trimetres only.

This sort of verse was excellently well suited to dialogue; but it was found difficult to keep up strictly and invariably to the measure, which made the poets endeavour to find out a method of lightening the difficulty, by calling in the assistance of the spondee, which has two long feet, and sometimes even the dactyle, though Horace takes no notice of this latter; but still the iambic was always to consist of equal feet, as 2, 4, 6, 8. Nevertheless, as this was but a dispensation from the strict observance of the rule, a good poet, who understood the principles of his art, would be sparing in his use of it. For spondees generally disorder the numbers, and spoil the harmony. The pure iambic  
of

of six feet has only nine syllables ; when joined with three spondees, it has ten and a half ; consequently, the intervals are at greater distances, and the measure is no longer exact. They spoil the harmony, because, instead of the exact mixture of long and short syllables, which are in the pure iambic, here are three long ones twice following in the third and fifth feet, and once two in the first. This was first of all done to correct the swiftness of the iambics, and give a greater majesty and gravity to the verse ; but, by this means, it has changed its agreeable quickness into a heavy and lumpish pace. This is what Horace calls, *versus missus magno cum pondere*.

Perhaps it may be said, that these niceties are observed but by a very few ; yet that is no excuse for the poet's negligence. Those who hope for immortality from their writings, must not allow themselves in the smallest error. The foolish indulgence, or, rather, want of judgment in the taste of the age, should not make them too secure, for, sooner or later, some discerning critic may start up, *naris acutæ*, who will discover those faults, and point them out to others.

*An author does not merit praise merely for not having committed faults.* It is not sufficient barely to be without faults, unless he has some beauties likewise.

*But our forefathers admired the jokes and numbers of Plautus : They did so ; but in this they car-*



ried their excess of good-nature to a degree of folly. Horace is not finding fault in this place with the elocution or comic vein of Plautus; he only blames what is truly blameable in that poet; his low pleasantries, his flat and unmeaning raillery, and his want of nicety in his versification, where the number of dactyles and spondees destroyed the measure and harmony.

*Read well the Greek originals.* Horace here speaks of the style and versification, and advises authors to turn over the Greek originals day and night: but without excluding the foundation of the things, and the manner of putting them in action. Never did any nation take so much pains in what regarded elocution as the Greeks. They engraved, says Dionysius of Halicarnassus, rather than painted. Every one knows what immense study and labor it cost Demosthenes, during a constant retirement of many months, before he had completely forged those thunderbolts of eloquence, whose greatest force, according to Cicero, was owing to their melody and cadence: *Non enim tanto impetu vibrarent fulmina illa, nisi numeris ferrentur.* Isocrates, who was no less a philosopher than an orator, was, some say, ten years, others, fourteen, in correcting one single discourse. Plato revised and corrected his dialogues, when he was upwards of eighty; and a great many alterations were found on his tablets when he died. And yet these authors wrote in prose, which admits  
of

of many liberties unknown to those who are subject to the laws of verse. What then are we to think of such an author as Homer, who, in point of elocution, carried the universal suffrages of every age and nation? If a discourse in prose required ten years to be made perfect, what time must have been necessary to give so sublime a degree of perfection to two poems that contain upwards of thirty thousand verses! Or, rather, what strength and richness of genius and taste must have been his, who could put the finishing hand to so many admirable things, in the short space of time allotted to human life? (a)

## XIX.

“Thespis is said to have first invented tragedy, till then unknown to the Greeks, and to have carried about his actors on carts, who played and sung their pieces, having their faces stained with lees of wine. Æschylus afterwards added the tragic mask, found out  
“a decent

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(a) Ignotum tragicæ genus invenisse camenæ  
Dicitur & plaustis vexisse poemata Thespis,  
Quæ canerent, agerentque peruncti facibus ora.  
Post hunc personæ\*, pallæque repertor honestæ  
Æschylus, & modicis instravit † pulpita tignis:

\* *Persona.*] A vizard or masque. It was made almost in the manner of a head-piece, with a face painted on it, agreeable to the age or particular character of the part which the person who wore it played.

† *Pulpita.*] The stage. *Pulpitum.* Roscon.

Et

“ a decent dress, and built a stage ; taught them  
 “ to speak with dignity, and accompany all  
 “ with just action. The old comedy appear-  
 “ ed next with great applause ; but, licentious  
 “ liberty degenerating at last into abuse and open  
 “ insolence, that required to be suppressed by  
 “ law, laws were accordingly enacted, and the  
 “ chorus shamefully ceased, when it had lost its  
 “ power to slander and hurt.

“ Our poets made attempts in every way ;  
 “ nor do they least deserve praise, when, dis-  
 “ daining to be beholden to the Greeks, they  
 “ have sought a subject for their verse at home,  
 “ either by representing the manners of the more  
 “ illustrious citizens, or a just imitation of com-  
 “ mon life. Nor would the Romans be less fa-  
 “ mous by their writings, than by their bravery  
 “ and great exploits, did not our poets account it  
 “ an insupportable toil to file, polish, and revise their  
 “ works :

*Et docuit, magnumque loqui, nitique cothurno.*

*Successit vetus his comœdia, non sine multa*

*Laude : sed in vitium libertas excidit, & vim †*

*Dignam lege regi. Lex est accepta : chorusque*

*Turpiter obticuit, sublato jure nocendi.*

*Nil intentatum nostri liquere poetæ :*

*Nec minimum meruere decus, vestigia Græca*

*Ausi deferere, & celebrare domestica facta,*

*Vel qui prætextas, vel qui docuere togatas.*

*Nec virtute foret, clarisve potentius armis,*

*Quàm linguâ, Latium, si non offenderet unum-*

*Quemque poetarum limæ labor, & mora. Vos, ô*

† *Vim.*] *Vis, the force, for the sharpness, the scandal.*

*Pompilius*

“ works : But do you, illustrious descendants of  
 “ Numa, discourage a poem that has not been  
 “ often reviewed and blotted, and which the  
 “ author has not gone ten times over with the  
 “ most critical eye.”

*The actors who played in the pieces of Thespis.*  
 In the Latin it is, *qui canerent agerentque*, who  
 sang and acted. The antients used to sing their  
 tragedies ; which were a kind of measured de-  
 clamation almost like the recitatives of our opera's.  
 When the subject became lyric, as in the chorus,  
 then the music took a louder and more lofty  
 strain. *Agerent* answers to what we now-a-days  
 call playing, acting, imitating by gestures, coun-  
 terfeiting.

*The old comedy had great applause.* The old  
 comedy was like tragedy, an imitation of a  
 real or feigned action ; only with this difference,  
 that tragedy takes its actions from exalted per-  
 sons only, comedy from those of common life  
 or urbanity (a).

*The Romans gained great reputation by their  
 tragedies and comedies.* This is the proper signifi-  
 cation of the words *prætextas* and *togatas* in this  
 place. The *prætexta* was a robe worn by the

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Pompilius sanguis, carmen reprehendite, quod non  
 Multa dies, & multa litura coercuit ; atque  
 Perfectum, decies non castigavit ad unguem.

(a) See the short history of comedy in the second volume of this  
 work.

grandees



grandees of Rome, and is here used as an emblem of the Roman tragedy. The *toga* was a robe worn by the common people, and stands for the Roman comedy. *Docuere* signifies no more than giving a piece to the stage. This term was affected by the poets who wrote for the stage; and were called teachers, *didactoi*, which shows plainly, that their end was not so much to divert as to instruct.

The pains and time to correct. *Labor et mora*. Two essential things to a perfect work: to correct with care, and to take the utmost pains in polishing and revising, even till one's tired of it, *labor*. But this is not all, time and patience are required, as well as pains and study. There are certain instants, when what one has long sought for in vain, happily presents itself to our imagination. A lucky circumstance of time or place, an accidental flash, a book lying open by chance, will often furnish one with ideas. Besides, while the imagination glows with the warmth that is necessary for composing, the taste is less clear and unconfined. The fondness of an author, like that of a mother, is of too tender a nature to know how to esteem, it can only love: Therefore it is necessary to take time and pains, *limæ labor & mora*.

This short historical passage properly belongs to the preceding discourse on versification, and is thrown here by way of episode, to give the reader breathing-time.

*A work*

*A work should come under your hand ten times, and each time be retouched with the greatest care.* The translation falls very short of the force of expression in the Latin, *perfectum decies non castigavit ad unguem*. This is a metaphor taken from those that work in marble, wood, &c. who, when their work is finished, *perfectum*, run their nail over to see whether it is smooth or not. This precept carries an excellent meaning with it. It is the nice; the delicate beauties of a work that constitute its perfection. These escape the common eye: But their effects are felt by the most ignorant. A work of this kind, in verse or prose, may have cost but a month to compose, which shall take up a year to correct and polish. Nevertheless this has bounds; we should know when to give over. The file may, by a too frequent use, be worn out; as Horace observes, when he says, a little higher, *sectantem lava nervi deficiunt animique*. (a)

## XX.

“Because Democritus fancied that a natural  
 “genius had much the advantage of art, and  
 “excluded every man in his senses from Heli-  
 “con; the greater part of the poets refuse to  
 “cut

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(a) Ingenium misera quia fortunatus arte

Credit, & excludit sanos Helicone poetas

Democritus\*, bona pars non ungues ponere curat,

\* Democritus maintained that art was useless in poetry, and that no man could make a good poet without fury and enthusiasm.

Non

" cut their nails or beard; they affect retirement,  
 " and are never seen at the public baths; per-  
 " suaded that they shall undoubtedly obtain the  
 " the name and reward of poetry, if they never  
 " put into the hands of Licinius their head, not  
 " to be cured by all the hellebore of the three  
 " Anticyra's. O extravagant folly! if in the  
 " spring I had not by some physic cured myself  
 " of the spleen, none would have writ better  
 " poems than I: But it gives me no great pain.  
 " I will therefore do the office of a whetstone,  
 " which, though itself incapable to cut, serves  
 " yet to sharpen the razor. Without writing  
 " myself, I will teach others how to acquit them-  
 " selves well, whence they are to draw their  
 " riches, what forms and improves a poet, what  
 " becomes, and what not; what is excellent or ill."

This

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Non barbam, secreta petit loca, balnea vitat.  
 Nanciscetur enim pretium, nomenque poetæ,  
 Si tribus Anticyris caput insanabile, nunquam  
 Tonfori Licino commiserit. O ego lævus  
 Qui purgor bilem sub verni temporis horam!  
 Non alius faceret meliora poemata. Verum  
 Nil tanti est. Ego fungar vice cotis†: acutum  
 Reddere quæ ferrum valet, exors ipsa secandi.  
 Munus, & officium, nil scribens ipse, docebo:  
 Unde parentur opes: quid alat, formetque poetam:  
 Quid deceat, quid non: quod virtus, quod ferat error.

† *Ego fungar vice cotis.*] Plutarch quotes a saying of Isocrates,  
 who, being asked how without eloquence he made others eloquent,  
 replied, *Whetstones do not cut themselves, but they make iron cut.*  
 Horace means, he wrote neither dramatic nor epic poetry, and there-  
 fore did not look upon himself as a poet. See the 11th verse.

(a) Scri-

This is a kind of introduction to the body of general precepts which follow. It abounds with a number of lively thoughts, and is an agreeable satire upon many people, who, in Horace's time, affected a slovenly air and retirement to be thought poets.

*Ingenium: A happy genius:* That is, a natural talent for producing without pains or labor; and whose productions have that air of freedom which is to be met with only in works that are produced without labor. *Ars misera* is the very reverse of the former, and signifies a laborious effort, which shews more good will than talent, and more art than nature. *Sanos poetas*, poets of a sound judgment, and regular imagination, who never experience the dangerous over-mettle of the poetic courser. (a)

## XXI.

“ Good sense is the source and ground of  
“ writing well: You are sure to meet with it in  
“ the writings of philosophers. When the sub-  
“ ject is once duly prepared and understood, pro-  
“ per words naturally offer themselves.

“ He who knows what he owes to his country  
“ and his friends, the different measures of respect  
“ due

---

(a) *Scribendi rectè, sapere est, & principium, & fons.*

*Rem tibi Socraticæ poterunt ostendere chartæ:*

*Verbaque provisam rem non invita sequentur.*

*Qui didicit; patriæ quid debeat, & quid amicis;*

*Quæ*



“ due to a father, a brother, and a stranger ;  
 “ what is the duty of a senator, what of a judge,  
 “ and how it becomes a general to act : he will  
 “ readily give to every one his proper character.

“ Whoever desires to imitate with justness,  
 “ let him study well the original of human life,  
 “ and learn hence to give every feature its true  
 “ likeness.

“ It sometimes happens, that a play, where  
 “ the sentiments are just, and the manners  
 “ strongly marked, though in other respects  
 “ without ornament, rough and undigested ; yet  
 “ succeeds better with the people, and engages  
 “ their attention, more than words destitute of  
 “ sense, and sounding harmonious trifles.

“ The Greeks had a genius enriched with all  
 “ the happy graces of eloquence ; fame was  
 “ their

Quo sit amore parens, quo frater amandus, & hospes :

Quod sit conscripti, quod judicis officium : quam

Partes in bellum missi ducis : ille profecto

Reddere personæ se sit convenientia cuique.

Respicere exemplar vitæ, morumque jubebo

Doctrinæ imitatore : & veras hinc ducere voces.

Interdum speciosa locis, morataque rectè

Fabula, nullius vèneris, sine pondere, & arte,

Valdiùs oblectat populum, meliusque moratur,

Quàm versus inopes rerum, nugæque canoræ.

Gratiis ingenium, Gratiis dedit ore rotundo

[ *Conscripti*, ] A senator, one of the conscript fathers. The  
 senators were called conscript fathers ; *Conscripti*, of a senator ;  
*judicis*, of a judge ; whether a prætor or arbitrator confirmed by the  
 prætor, Roscom.

Musa.

“ their only ambition and end. Our youth are  
 “ bred up in a very different way ; their heads  
 “ are filled with calculations how to divide  
 “ a pound into an hundred parts. Say, son of  
 “ Albinus, if from five ounces one is taken away,  
 “ what will remain ? Why don't you answer ?  
 “ ALB. Four. HOR. Well said ; you give hopes  
 “ of being an admirable oeconomist. Add an  
 “ ounce to five, what will it make ? ALB. Six.  
 “ HOR. When once this rust and love of gain,  
 “ has taken hold of the soul, can we imagine it  
 “ capable of noble thoughts, or poems worthy  
 “ to be rubbed with oil of cedar, or kept in  
 “ cases of cypress ?”

*Good sense is the source and ground of writing well.* But does the word *sapere* signify to have

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Musa loqui, præter laudem nullius avaria.  
 Romani pueri longis rationibus assent  
 Discunt in partes centum diducera. Dicat  
 Filius Albi, si de quincunce remota est  
 Uncia, quid superat ? poterat dixisse ; triens || : heus  
 Rem poteris servare tuam. Redit uncia, quid sit ?  
 Semis. An hæc animos ærugo ; & cura peculi  
 Cum semel imbuerit, speramus carmina fingi  
 Posse linenda cedro, & levi servanda cupresso § ?

|| *Triens*,] The third part of a pound. The Roman pound was twelve ounces.

§ *Posse linenda cedro, & levi servanda cupresso* ?] The booksellers, to preserve their good books, rubbed them with cedar juice, called *cedrium*, which preserved them from the worms, and then kept them in cypress cases, which had the same nature as the cedar. Horace here speaks allegorically ; his meaning is, if we would have our writings reach posterity,

*good sense*, or, to have a *good taste*? This word, in its common acceptation, is taken for the faculty of tasting, or distinguishing the true savour or relish of any thing. I am apt to think, that this word stands here both for *good sense* and *good taste*; for, in fact, good sense and good taste are but one and the same thing considered as a faculty. *Good sense* is that rectitude of the mind, by which it perceives what is true and just, and attaches itself to them. *Good taste* is this same rectitude, by which the mind perceives what is good, and approves it. The man of good sense has a good taste, and the man who has a good taste is necessarily a man of good sense; the difference lies only in the objects: *Good sense* is commonly restricted to things which are more immediately the object of the senses; *good taste* to objects of a more refined and elevated nature. Therefore, good taste, taken in this sense, is no other than good sense refined, and employed on objects of a delicate and superior kind; and good sense is only good taste confined to mere material and sensible objects. *Truth* is equally an object of the taste with goodness; and the mind has its taste as well as the heart.

*The things are to be found in the writings of the philosophers; and, when once they are duly understood, proper words follow naturally.* This proposition is divided into two branches; one regards the subject itself, and the other the elocution or style. As to the things, Horace tells them where they

they are to be found : In the philosophy of Socrates, the Academic who alone enlightens the mind, and teaches ethics better than all the rest of the philosophers. When once a poet is well acquainted with these, he will know how to render them with their becoming characters and manners. It may be said of a poet, as Cicero said of himself as an orator, that he is more indebted to philosophy than to poetry: *Fateor me oratorem si modo sim, non ex officinis Rhetorum, sed ex Academicæ spatiiis extitisse.* Orat. cap. 3.

As to the style, Horace advises the skilful imitator to study men and manners, to take his expressions from nature, and to let these not only be true, like the resemblance in a picture, but lively and animated like the original itself. This division is an explanation of what follows.

*A fable, fabula*, that is, an action where the sentiments are fine, and the manners well distinguished, *speciosa locis* : though it has neither grace, *nullius veneris*, dignity of thought, *sine pondere*, nor art or conduct in the disposition of the subject, *sine arte*, yet will always please better than fine sounding verse, and beautiful sentences which have no relation to the characters of the actors, and are mere wind and vapor, chiming trifles, as he calls them, *nugæ canoræ* ; for, having neither manners nor sentiments, they amuse the ear, but do not speak to the heart.

*The Greeks possessed both these* : A genius for invention, *ingenium* ; and the most exact art and taste in the expression, *ore rotundo loqui*. Fame

was



was their only ambition; the love of which can alone animate and exalt the talents. Applause gives birth to genius, or, at least, calls it forth to action. And if it is said, that a man is to be valued only according to his real merit, we may also say, that a man has only so much merit as the world is pleased to give him. (a)

## XXII.

“A poet’s design is, either to instruct or please,  
“or say what may at the same time be both use-  
“ful and agreeable.

“Let your precepts be clear and succinct that  
“the mind may readily comprehend them, and  
“the memory retain them long: Who receives  
“that only which is necessary, and suffers the  
“superfluous to escape.

“When you aim to divert by fictions, let  
“them have as near a resemblance as possible to  
“truth; nor imagine, that by being fiction it  
“has a right to persuade us what it pleases, or  
“may, with impunity, bring upon the stage a  
“child taken alive from a sorceress that had but  
“just before devoured it.

“The

---

(a) Aut prodesse volunt, aut delectare poetæ:

Aut simul & jucunda, & idonea dicere vitæ.

Quidquid præcipies, esto brevis; ut citò dicta

Percipiant animi dociles, teneantque fideles.

Omne supervacuum pleno de pectore manat.

Ficta voluptatis causâ, sint proxima veris.

Nec quodcunque volet, possit sibi fabula credi:

Neu prænæ Lamæ vivum puerum extrahat alvo.

Centurie

“The senators will never applaud a work  
 “destitute of instruction: The knights dislike  
 “too great an austerity. The true point of per-  
 “fection is to mix the useful and agreeable, and  
 “improve and please the reader at the same time.  
 “These are the volumes that enrich booksellers,  
 “pass the seas with applause, and bring immor-  
 “tal fame to the authors.”

This relates to the design that every poet pro-  
 poses to himself in his works; which is to in-  
 struct and please, or, more properly, both the one  
 and the other. For, as Phædrus says, none but  
 a fool will applaud himself for a work that is not  
 of some use: *Nisi utile est quod facimus, stulta est*  
*gloria.* There are two sorts of poems, one de-  
 signed for instruction, the other for pleasure;

Centuriæ seniorum † agitant expertia frugis.  
 Celsi prætereunt austera poemata Rhamnes ‖.  
 Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci,  
 Lectorem delectando, pariterque monendo.  
 Hic meret æra liber Sosis‡: hic & mare transit;  
 Et longum noto scriptori prorogat ævum.

[† *Centuriæ seniorum.*] The Roman people were divided into  
 classes and centuries.

[‖ *Celsi Rhamnes.*] The equites, or knights. Nothing is more ri-  
 diculous than to imagine that *celsi* is here for high, such as are of  
 great courage, *excelsò animo Rhamnes*; i. e. *Romani*, for Rhamnes  
 is the name of one of the three ancient tribes, into which the people  
 were distributed: The Rhamnenses, the Tatians, and the Luceres.  
*Vid. Tit Liv. lib. i. i Decad.*

[‡ *Hic meret æra liber Sosis.*] The Sosis's were two famous book-  
 sellers of that time.

in that the author's principal view is to instruct, in this to amuse and divert, but so as that the one object does not exclude the other. Profit is the principal object of the first of these kinds, pleasure of the latter. But in one the useful stands in need of being set off by the agreeable, in the other, the agreeable is supported by the useful; without this the former would appear harsh, dry, and heavy; the latter flat and insipid.

*Fiction has no right to expect our belief of impossibilities.* The word *fiction*, *fabula*, in this place does not signify the history of gods and poetic heroes, but the action itself which makes the subject of the poem. Every thing relating to mythology has a right to a place in poetry, where they have a suppositious truth, which no one attempts to controvert. But circumstances owe their beings wholly to the invention of the poet, and want the necessary appearance of probability, displeasure, and should not enter into any work that is intended for pleasure. Nevertheless, it must be allowed, that there are many passages in the most celebrated poets of antiquity, Homer and Virgil, where fiction seems to have been carried too far. What are we to think of this seeming contradiction? Let us hear Horace upon the head. (a)

## XXIII.

“ Yet there are some faults we ought frankly  
 “ to excuse, for a string does not always return  
 the

---

(a) Sunt delicta tamen, quibus ignovisse velimus :

“ the sound the player wanted, and will some-  
 “ times jar in spite of all his art : The most  
 “ skilful archer cannot always hit his aim. But,  
 “ in a poem writ with elegance, I will not be  
 “ offended with a few slight faults that may be  
 “ owing to a pardonable neglect, and that frailty  
 “ which is natural to man. Where then is  
 “ this indulgence to stop ? As an amanuensis,  
 “ who, though told of it, still commits the same  
 “ blunder, deserves no pardon, or a musician  
 “ who, in playing, is always out at the same  
 “ note, is sure to be laughed at by the com-  
 “ pany; so the poet, who often runs into absur-  
 “ dities, seems to me another Chærilus, who  
 “ now and then stumbles upon a tolerable line,  
 “ but is every-where else ridiculous and con-  
 “ temptible. On the contrary, I fret and am  
 “ displeased, when sometimes I observe Homer  
 “ to nod ; but in long works it is excusable, if  
 “ at times we are surprized by sleep.”

---

Nam neque chorda sonum reddit, quem vult manus & mens,

Poscentique gravem persæpè remittit acutum :

Nec semper feriet quodcunque minabitur arcus.

Verùm ubi plura nitent in carmine : non ego paucis

Offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit,

Aut humana parum cavit natura. Quid ergo ?

Ut scriptor si peccat idem librarius usque,

Quamvis est monitus, veniâ caret ; & citharædus

Ridetur, chordâ qui semper obeerrat eâdem ;

Sic mihi, qui multùm cessât, sit Chærilus ille,

Quem bis, terve bonum, cum risu miror : & idem

Indignor quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus.

Verùm opere in longo fas est obrepere somnum.



In this passage Horace bespeaks our indulgence towards great writers; but at the same time he tells us what limits we are to set to this. An author who often falls into negligence and errors, may deservedly be compared to Chœrilus, that wretched poet whom Alexander paid so well for singing his exploits. We may find two or three places in his works that deserve to be read again and again; and we may laugh heartily to think, that so vile an author in most respects should be admirable in any. But, though we may divert ourselves with this inconsistency in Chœrilus, we feel a secret indignation if Homer happens to slumber, though but for an instant. *Quandoque* is the same as *quandocumque*, *si quando*; *When if it happens that*. How just, how polite is this thought! Horace has so great a respect for Homer, that he does not presume to determine concerning his faults; but contents himself with letting drop a slight hint that he is not infallible, to let his readers see that every thing is not alike perfect even in the greatest men; and then immediately proceeds to make an excuse for any weakness of that poet: *Verum opere in longo, &c.* *Bonus* should, in my opinion, be rendered in the simple sense; it is by no means intended as an additional epithet to the proper name. *Homer*, alone, is more expressive than the *excellent Homer*; as *Cæsar*, singly, is preferable to the *glorious Cæsar*. The term *bonus* has nothing of low or mean in it on this occasion.

sion. It shews the tender affection and degree of respect that his readers in general have for him. Homer is every-where so just, so simple, so natural, and so modest, that his character seems to be that of goodness itself. If we say, *honest la Fontaine*, or *honest Chaucer*, is it to be taken as a reflection upon either of these authors? Is it not rather an expression of the heart, which shews that we love the poet for his simplicity, as much as we admire him for his wit? (a)

## XXIV.

“Poetry resembles painting. Some pieces please most when viewed near, others at a distance. This loves the dark, that must be examined in the light, nor fears the piercing eye of the acuteſt judge. Some please for once, some viewed a thousand times will please.”

*Poetry resembles painting.* The ſole difference between theſe two arts is, that the one expreſſes itſelf by colors and lines, the other by words and harmony. The ſame invention, the ſame

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(a) † *Ut pictura, poeſis erit quæ, ſi propriùs ſtes,  
Te capiet magis; & quædam, ſi longius abſtes,  
Hæc amat obſcurum: volet hæc ſub luce videri,  
Judicis argutum quæ non formidat acumen.*  
Hæc placuit ſemel: hæc decies repetita placebit.

† I am for reading with the former editions: *Ut pictura, poeſis erit quæ, &c.* The turn is more Latin, more Horatian, and the expreſſion juſter: *Ut pictura ſic quædam erit poeſis quæ*

disposition, the same genius and taste, take place in the one as in the other.

*There are some places.*---I cannot perceive the justness of the parallel drawn here by Horace, unless we give the above sense to the word *Poesis*, for I know of no one poem which, taken all together, will admit of being viewed at a distance in a small light, or only for once and away. For, were it only an epigram, if it is well made, it will please at all times. Therefore I look upon Horace's meaning to be as follows: That as there are some pictures which should be viewed near, and others at a distance, to have their effect, as the painters term it; so there are some places in a poem which will not bear to be viewed with attention, as partaking more of the rough design than the elegance and nicety of the brush; and others again, which only please by their variety, and have nothing interesting in themselves; such are to be viewed at a distance only. This explanation is Mr. Dacier's, which I rather chose to adopt on this account, than to say, that this passage does not seem to me to have that clearness and precision for which Horace is so justly admired.

But though one may readily conceive that there are some paintings which should be viewed only at a distance, by a faint light, or for a moment: yet we do not know any poem, or part of a poem, which will bear the comparison, unless such part is in itself very bad, or, at best,  
but

but meanly executed. It is certain, that a poem has its point of light as well as a picture; and that there are certain parts of a poem which cannot be separated from the rest. Horace then might have contented himself with saying: It is with poetic paintings as with pictures, they are to be viewed in their proper point of light. Consequently, we ought to view a dramatic piece as it appears upon the theatre, and not on paper; one scene together with those which precede or follow it, and not by itself, and stript of all its connections. If we examine this passage of Horace carefully, we shall find this to be the true sense of it. He is giving a piece of advice to those who pretend to decide upon poetical productions, without placing themselves in a proper situation to form a right judgment of the piece before them. (a)

## XXV.

“ But you, elder Piso, though formed by the  
 “ precepts of your father to justness of taste, and  
 “ wise by your own experience; yet disdain not  
 “ to treasure up the following truths in your me-  
 “ mory.

Q3

“ There

(a) O major juvenum, quamvis & voce paternâ  
 Fingeris ad rectum, & per te sapis, hoc tibi dictum  
 Tolle meorum: certis medium & tolerabile rebus



“ There are some things in which mediocrity  
 “ is allowable, and even esteemed. A lawyer  
 “ or pleader may fall short of the eloquence of  
 “ Messala, or the vast reading of Cassellius Aulus,  
 “ and yet be very much valued : But neither  
 “ gods, men, nor the pillars of the booksellers,  
 “ will allow of a mean in poetry. For as, an  
 “ ill concert, coarse perfumes, or poppy-seed  
 “ mixed with Sardinian honey, offend against  
 “ the delicacy of a feast, because the scene might  
 “ have passed without them ; in like manner  
 “ poetry, originally invented to delight and un-  
 “ bend the mind, if it does not rise to the height  
 “ of

Rectè concedi. Consultus juris, & actor  
 Causarum mediocris, abest virtute disertæ  
 Messalæ, nec scit quantum Cassellius Aulus ;  
 Sed tamen in pretio est. Mediocribus esse poetis  
 Non homines, non dî, non concessere columnæ \*.  
 Ut gratas inter mensas symphonia discors,  
 Et crassum unguentum, & Sardo cum melle † papaver,  
 Offendunt ; poterat duci ‡ quia cœna sine istis :  
 Sic animis natum, inventumque poema juvenilis,

\* *Concessere columnæ.*] The pillars which rang with the sound of poets repeating their verses, and might be said to groan when those verses were bad ; *ruptæ lectore columnæ.* But these poets are more likely to be those of the booksellers shops, where their books were fixed for sale. The old commentator says, they were posts where the poets put up the bills of the time and place, when and where they would publicly read their works.

† *Sardo cum melle.*] The honey of Sardinia was remarkably bad : *Sardois videar tibi amarior herbis.* Virg. ecl. viii.

‡ *Duci.*] May be protracted, may last a long time.

“ of perfection, sinks below contempt. A man  
 “ who has never learned to handle arms, avoids  
 “ the exercises of the Campus Martius; so he w<sup>l</sup> o  
 “ knows not to toss the ball, play at quoits, or  
 “ drive the hoop, quietly sits still, lest he should  
 “ expose himself to be laughed at and hissed by  
 “ the mob: But every ignorant pretender will  
 “ be meddling with poetry. Why not? I am  
 “ free, well-born, and rated at a knight’s estate;  
 “ my life is without reproach: Who then can  
 “ object to my being a poet?

“ But you, Piso, will never attempt any thing  
 “ in contradiction to your genius and natural  
 “ bent; such is your judgment and good sense.  
 “ If, however, it should ever be your fate to  
 “ write, submit it to the criticism of Metius,  
 “ your father, and me, and keep it in your  
 Q 4 “ hands

---

*Si paulum summo discessit, vergit ad imum.  
 Ludere qui nescit, campestribus abstinet armis:  
 Indoctusque pilæ, discive, trochive quiescit,  
 Ne spissæ risum tollant impune coronæ.*

*Qui nescit, versus tamen audet fingere. Quid ni?*

*Liber & ingenuus, præsertim census equestrem*

*Summam nummorum, vitiisque remotus ab omni.*

*Tu nihil invitâ dices, faciesque Minervâ:*

*Id tibi judicium est, ea mens. Si quid tamen olim*

*Scripteris, in Meti descendat judicis aures,*

[ *Census equestrem Summam nummorum.* ] It required to be worth about 20,000 livres (or 875 *l.* sterling) yearly rent, to be put in the register of the *census*, as rich enough to be a knight.

§ *In Meti descendat judicis aures.* ] Speaking of Spurius Metius Tarpæ, a great critic, and one of the judges appointed to examine the prize-writings.

Et

“hands for a long time. While your papers  
 “are within your own desk, you may blot,  
 “change, and efface at pleasure; but what has  
 “once got abroad cannot be recalled.”

A person who writes verses for the public, is exactly in the situation of a story-teller, who begins with, *Now you shall hear a surprising thing.* If you are to instruct us in any thing of consequence to us, tell us it in prose, the thing itself will be more clear for it, and the interest we have in it will sufficiently secure our attention. But you speak to us in verse; then doubtless you propose to please and entertain us? Be it so; but mind you keep your word, and remember that we must have beauty: *Itaque in iis artibus in quibus non utilitas quaeritur necessaria, sed animi libera quaedam oblectatio, quam diligenter & quam propè fastidiosè judicamus! Neque enim lites, neque controversiae sunt quæ cogant homines sicut in foro, non bonos oratores, item in theatra actores malos perpeti.* Cic. de Orat. l. i. c. 26.

Horace, fearing lest he might discourage Piso by what he has been saying of the difficulties attending poetry, passes immediately to the praise of it: He shows the rewards of those who succeed in it; and proves, from the honors

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Et patris, & nostras; nonumque prematur in annum.  
 Membranis intus positis delere licebit  
 Quod non edideris. Nescit vox missa reverti.

paid

paid to the first poets, as Orpheus, Amphion, &c. that the greatest or wisest man may apply himself to the study of it without any disgrace. (a)

## XXVI.

“Orpheus, that sacred interpreter of the  
 “will of the gods, by the power of his num-  
 “bers reclaimed the first men from their bloody  
 “meats and savage life. ’Twas for this that  
 “he was said to have tamed tigers, and softened  
 “the rage of lions. So likewise has it been  
 “said of Amphion who built the citadel of  
 “Thebes, that his harmonious harp gave mo-  
 “tion to stones, and by gentle persuasion ranged  
 “them each in their stations. Of old, poetry  
 “was accounted the organ of wisdom, and  
 “taught to distinguish private from public good;  
 “to separate between things sacred and civil;

Q5

“to

(a) Sylvestres homines sacer, interpretque deorum  
 Cædibus & victu fædo \* deterruit Orpheus.

Dictus ob hoc lenire tigres, rabidosque leones.

Dictus & Amphion Thebæ conditor arcis†,

Saxa movere sono testudinis, & prece blandâ

Ducere quod vellet. Fuit hæc sapientia quondam,

Publica privatis secernere, sacra profanis;

\* *Victu fædo.*] Men, when wild and uncivilized, lived upon the raw flesh and drank the blood of the animals they killed.

† *Thebæ conditor arcis.*] Cadmus built the city of Thebes about 1400 years before Christ; and, 25 years after, it was built. Amphion encompassed it with walls, and built a citadel.



"to forbid promiscuous love, and explain the  
 "duties of the married state; to build cities,  
 "and establish wholesome laws. Thus honor  
 "and renown daily increased to poetry and the  
 "divine race of poets. After these, Homer and  
 "Tyrtaeus awakened martial courage, and  
 "founded the alarms of war: Oracles were  
 "delivered in verse; in them the secrets of na-  
 "ture were traced: Pierian measures served to  
 "gain the favor of kings, made a part of the  
 "public shows, and refreshed the mind sunk  
 "under a weight of toil. Blush not, therefore,  
 "Piso, to make court to Apollo, and associate  
 "with the muses skilled in the harp."

---

Concubitu prohibere vago; dare jura maritis;  
 Oppida moliri; leges incidere ligno.  
 Sic honor, & nomen divinis vatibus, atque  
 Carminibus venit. Post hos insignis Homerus,  
 Tyrtaeusque† mares animos in Martia bella  
 Versibus exacuit. Dictæ per carmina sortes:  
 Et vitæ monstrata via est: & gratia regum  
 Pieriis tentata modis: ludusque repertus.  
 Et longorum operum finis: ne fortè pudori  
 Sit tibi musa lyræ solers, & cantor Apollo.

† *Tyrtaeusque.*] He was a schoolmaster, little, ugly, limping, and  
 one-eyed; the Athenians gave him, by way of derision, to the Spar-  
 tans, who, by order of the Pythian Apollo, demanded a general of  
 them, to lead them against the Messenians; which he did, but  
 was several times defeated, till, repeating some of his verses at  
 the head of his army, the soldiers were so animated by them,  
 that they fell on the enemy and gained a complete victory.

Nothing

Nothing can be more delightful than poetry, while it is dedicated to virtue and truth. As it perfectly well expresses the soft delirium of the soul, it is particularly suited to express those sentiments of respect, admiration, and gratitude which we owe to the supreme Being; and to those excellent men who were the living images of his justice and goodness. But, when once it prostitutes itself to the purposes of vice, it commits a sort of profanation on its own character, which totally degrades and dishonors itself. Licitious poets deserve no favor. If there are beauties in their elocution, we must not find fault with those, for fear of being unjust; yet ought we to be very careful how we praise them, lest, on the other hand, we should appear to give a sanction to vice. (a)

## XXVII.

“It has been long a question, whether a poet  
 “was formed by art or nature. I neither see  
 “what art can do without a rich vein, or a fine  
 “genius without the help of art; for each re-  
 “quires the other’s aid, and amicably conspire  
 “in the same end.

“He

---

(a) Naturâ fieret laudabile carmen, an arte,  
 Quæsitum est. Ego nec studium sine divite vena,  
 Nec rudè quid profit video ingenium: alterius sit.  
 Altera poseit opem res, & conjurat amicè.

“ He that hopes to carry off the Olympic  
 “ prize, must inure himself to exercise and fa-  
 “ tigue ; he must bear heat and cold, and re-  
 “ nounce love and wine.

“ A musician ventures not to sing the Pythian  
 “ songs, till he has first learned under an able  
 “ master. But now every scribler passes for a  
 “ poet, who has the confidence to boast that his  
 “ verses are admirable. Shame to the hindmost  
 “ in the race : It were a scandal for me not to  
 “ hold the first rank, or own my ignorance of  
 “ things that I never understood.”

Horace here gives a very important piece of  
 advice to such as are desirous of being received  
 into the rank of poets. They must be born with  
 a talent for it, *naturâ*; and have improved this  
 talent with care, *arte*. They must have a rich  
 vein which flows in abundance; and, besides  
 all this, they must have drawn large supplies  
 from the excellent sources of antiquity. (a)

## XXVIII.

“ A poet rich in lands, and money, invites a  
 “ set of flatterers to gain, as a public crier brings  
 “ the

---

Qui studet optatam cursu contingere metam,  
 Multa tulit, fecitque puer : sudavit, & alsit :  
 Abstinnit Venere, & vino. Qui Pythia cantat  
 Tibicen, didicit prius, extimuitque magistrum.  
 Nunc satis est dixisse, Ego mira poemata pango.  
 Occupet extremum scabies : mihi turpe relinqui est,  
 Et quod non didici, sanè nescire fateri.

(a) Ut præco ad merces turbam qui cogit emendas,

Assentatores

“ the croud together to a sale of goods. If  
 “ moreover, he is liberal in his entertainments,  
 “ ready to give bail for the poorer sort, and  
 “ warmly espouses their cause when involved in  
 “ intricate suits ; I shall wonder much if he has  
 “ the good fortune to discern between a true and  
 “ a false friend.

“ If at any time you have been liberal to a  
 “ friend, or intend to make him some present,  
 “ read not your verses before him while his heart  
 “ is yet full of joy, for he will cry out at every  
 “ line, Fine, charming, admirable ! he will look  
 “ pale and astonish’d, shed tears of gratitude ;  
 “ leap from his seat, and stamp with his foot  
 “ upon the ground. As men hired to weep at  
 “ funerals are more loud and noisy than they  
 “ who truly mourn, so a flatterer seems always  
 “ to be more moved than a real friend. Great  
 “ men,

---

*Assentatores jubet ad lucrum ire poeta  
 Dives agris, dives positus in fœnore nummis.  
 Si verò est unctum qui rectè ponere possit ;  
 Et spondere levi pro paupere, & eripere atris  
 Litibus implicitum, mirabor, si sciet inter  
 Nolcere mendacem, verumque beatos amicum,  
 Tu seu donaris, seu quid donare voles cui,  
 Nolito ad versus tibi factos ducere plenum  
 Lætitiæ. Clamabit enim, Pulchrè, bene, rectè !  
 Pallefcet super his ; etiam stillabit amicis  
 Ex oculis rorem : saliet : tundet pede terram.  
 Ut qui conducti plorant in funere, dicunt  
 Et faciunt prope plura dolentibus ex animo : sic  
 Derisor vero plus laudatore movetur.*



“men, when they would unmask the soul, and  
 “see its deepest thoughts, whether worthy of  
 “trust and friendship, are said to try it with  
 “wine, and strongly urge the full cups. Wine  
 “is the rack of the soul, and never fails to extort  
 “the real truth from it. When you write  
 “poems, beware of being deceived by falsehood  
 “lurking under the guise of the fox.”

This may serve as a general piece of advice to every author who wants the opinion of another concerning his works. The principal requisite in a good critic is to be divested of all partiality, and to have nothing to hope or fear from the party. Now follow the other qualifications of a good critic. (a)

## XXIX.

“If you read any thing to Quintilius, he  
 “frankly tells you, Correct this, and this: If  
 “you answer that you have often tried in vain,  
 “and can’t change it for the better; then blot  
 “it out altogether, and fashion a-new every  
 “harsh ill-running verse. If he found you ob-  
 stinately

---

Reges dicuntur multis urgere culullis,  
 Et torquere mero, quem perspexisse laborent  
 An sit amicitia dignus. Si carmina condēs,  
 Nunquam te fallant animi sub vulpe latentes.  
 (a) Quintilio si quid recitares, corrige sodes  
 Hoc, aiebat, & hoc. Melius te posse negares,  
 Bis, terque expertum frustra; delere jubebat,  
 Et malè tornatos ineudi redpere versus.

“stinately bent to defend your faults rather than  
 “amend them, he said no more: but, thinking  
 “it best to spare himself an useless trouble, left  
 “you to hug, without a rival, yourself, and  
 “your darling book.

“An impartial prudent friend will give notice  
 “of every idle line, blame such as run harsh,  
 “score out what wants grace and beauty, and  
 “retrench every superfluous ornament; make you  
 “explain what seems obscure, challenge an  
 “ambiguous expression, and nicely mark every  
 “thing that wants to be changed. In a word,  
 “he will be an Aristarchus; nor say, Why should  
 “I lose my friend for such trifles as these? for  
 “these trifles will be of serious consequence to  
 “you, when they have once made you ridiculous  
 “and the jest of the world.”

Si defendere delictum, quàm vertere, malles;  
 Nullum ultra verbum, aut operam sumebat inanem,  
 Quin sine rivali teque & tua solus amares.  
 Vir bonus & prudens versus reprehendet inertes:  
 Culpabit duros: incomptis allinet atrum  
 Transverso calamo signum: ambitiosa recidet  
 Ornamenta: parum claris lucem dare coget:  
 Arguet ambiguè dictum: mutanda notabit:  
 Fiet Aristarchus\*: nec dicet, Cur ego amicum  
 Offendam in nugis? Hæ nugæ seria ducent  
 In mala derisum semel, exceptumque sinistre.

\* *Fiet Aristarchus.*] Aristarchus gave his name to criticism. He exercised it in the most judicious and penetrating manner, and with a surprizing integrity. He lived in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus. He revised and corrected Homer.

*Et male tornatos incudi reddere versus.* We may read either *ter natos* or *tornatos*, both of them having much the same signification. Iron may be turned, (wrought,) as well as wood, and, before it is turned, it must have been fashioned upon the anvil. In like manner, if a verse has been three times under the hammer and still comes out imperfect, the thought must be put into the forge and melted over again; or, at least, undergo a fresh operation upon the anvil, till it takes that form which is best suited to the versification. But there is no necessity of commenting upon this passage, the author himself is sufficiently clear. But the following will, I believe, require some explanation. Here we meet with those lessons of moderation and decorum which most writers, especially the poets, seem to stand greatly in need of. (a)

## XXX.

“ The wiser part of mankind are not more  
 “ careful to shun one infected with the leprosy  
 “ or jaundice, a lunatic or madman, than a poet  
 “ in his rhyming raging fit; none but fools or  
 “ boys will follow him, who are ignorant of the  
 “ danger. Such a one, when in a raving humor  
 “ he

---

(a) *Ut mala quem scabies, aut morbus regius urget,  
 Aut fanaticus error, & iracunda Diana;  
 Vellum tetigisse timent, fugiuntque poetam,  
 Qui sapiunt: agitant pueri: incautique sequuntur.*

Hic,

" he vomits up his pompous lines, if peradven-  
 " ture, as a sportsman sometimes intent upon  
 " his game, he tumbles into a ditch or well ;  
 " though with a lengthened tone he cries for  
 " help, no person alive cares to assist or pity  
 " him. Were any one to offer their aid, and  
 " throw a rope to bring him out, I would be the  
 " first to ask, what are you doing ? How do  
 " you know but he fell in on purpose, and does  
 " not want to be delivered ? I would tell how  
 " the famed Sicilian poet Empedocles died, who,  
 " full of the whim of being thought a god,  
 " leapt in a cold fit into burning *Ætna*. Give  
 " poets leave to perish when they are so minded :  
 " To keep a poet alive against his will, is  
 " equally

---

Hic, dum sublimes versus ructatur†, & errat,  
 Si, veluti meralis intentus decidit auceps,  
 In puteum, foveamve : licet, succurrite, longum  
 Clamet, Io cives : non sit, qui tollere curet.  
 Si quis curet opem ferre, & demittere funem ;  
 Quisquis, an prudens huc se dejecerit, atque  
 Servari nolit ? dicam : Siculique poetæ  
 Narrabo interitum. Deus immortalis haberi  
 Dum cupit Empedocles, ardentem frigidus *Ætham*  
 Infiluit. Sit jus, liceatque perire poetis.  
 Invitum qui servat, idem facit occidenti.

† *Ructatur*.] He belches or vomits up his verses. There are  
 a number of persons who write verses only for the sake of writing  
 them, without ever considering what is required of them by the  
 kind of subject or object they would express. The sophist Aristides  
 said to an emperor, " We are not some of those who vomit up their  
 " writings, but of those who make them."



"equally a sin with killing him. This is not  
 "the first instance of his folly, nor, if you ex-  
 "tricate him now, will he be a jot the wiser,  
 "or lay aside his frolic of a famous death. In-  
 "deed it is hard to say why he has been seized  
 "with this vein of rhyming; perhaps he has  
 "profaned his father's tomb, or sacrilegiously  
 "removed the bounds of some consecrated place.  
 "One thing is certain, that he is possessed, and,  
 "like a bear who has broke through all the  
 "bars and bolts that secured his den, puts all  
 "he meets, learned and unlearned, to flight,  
 "by eternally reciting his verses. Whoever he  
 "can seize upon, he is sure to hold him, and  
 "read him to death; like a leech that, once  
 "fastened, sticks close to the skin till ready to  
 "burst with blood."

This whole passage, which is very lively,  
 and abounds with humor, is one continued  
 piece of allegory. Horace gives us the picture of  
 a bad poet, born without the least talent for  
 writing, and who, nevertheless, will make verses,

---

Nec semel hoc fecit : nec si retractus erit, jam  
 Fiet homo, & ponet famose mortis amorem.  
 Nec satis apparet cur versus facit : utrum  
 Minxerit in patrios cineres, an triste bidental  
 Moverit incestus. Certè furit : ac velut ursus,  
 Objectos caveæ valuit si frangere clathros,  
 Indoctum, doctumque fugat recitator acerbus.  
 Quem verò arripuit, tenet, occiditque legendo,  
 Non missura cutem nisi plena cruoris hirudo.

which.

which he is fond of shewing to every body, but cannot bear to have them censured. Had the author had no other design than barely to describe an extravagant poet, who really throws himself into a ditch, he would have concluded his Art of Poetry, which is now the best and most complete of all his works, more like a school-boy than a master.

But let us raise the mask of allegory. After having shewn what are the qualifications of a good critic, he next addresses the poets themselves whose works are subjected to criticism, and paints to them, in lively colors, their own folly, in refusing to submit to the public censure. One would think, says he, that these people were mad. Every prudent critic is fearful of meddling with their works, *tetigisse timent*. None but fools, or those void of experience, *pueri*, and who do not see what danger they expose themselves to, *incauti*, will listen to them, *sequuntur*, or pretend to criticise on what they do, *exagitant*. Therefore, if a poet of this sort, fancying himself equal to Apollo, goes about mouth-ing out his verses, *rustatur*, which he thinks the most sublime, and runs into a thousand extravagances, loses himself every moment, and is always flying off from his subject, *errat*, falls at length into the most gross mistakes, *in puteum*, he may roar out, "For God's sake, dear friends, give me your advice; I intreat you to assist me with your counsels," *Io cives, succurrite*

But be careful how you attempt to give him any wholesome advice to cure him of his folly, *non sit qui tollere curet*: Leave him no way to disengage himself. Nay, it is very likely that he may have looked upon these faults as great beauties, and have committed them with the utmost deliberation, *prudens*. Poets have their oddities, witness Empedocles, who, to make his name famous, threw himself into *Ætna*. Every poet then has an undoubted right to commit what follies he pleases, and to hang or drown his reputation, if he thinks proper, *liceat perire poetis*. You do such an one as great an injury in preventing him from writing bad, as in finding fault with him when he writes well: At least he thinks so. Besides, you are to consider him as incorrigible. You may get him out of a scrape to-day, and to-morrow he will throw himself into the very same condition: He will be talked of, let it be never so much to his discredit, *non ponet famosæ mortis amorem*. He is fond of every thing out of the common road! In a word, his brain is turned. Sure that man must have been guilty of some atrocious crime, whom the gods have punished with this fury of making verses. And he is absolutely furious: To see him one would swear it was a wild beast broke loose from its cage: He destroys every one he meets, with repeating his verses to them. And he does not act thus with a view to have his faults shewn him, as every wise and sober author would; but

but merely to suck in praises; and, when he is brimful, off he drops, and you are quit of him.

Nothing can be more lively, rich, just, and consequently more beautiful, than this picture Horace has here drawn of a vain-glorious poet, who is foolishly, madly, fond of his own productions. There are many authors who might greatly advantage by the lessons here offered them. But alas! those who sin in this way, the greater need they have of them, the less they always think they have.

Though Horace intitles his work *the Art of Poetry*, we are not to imagine that it contains every particular rule for each species of writing. The author has handled his subject in a more masterly manner. Raised on the wings of philosophy, he passes over minuter disquisitions, and enters immediately on the principles, leaving to the intelligent reader to draw the necessary consequences. He speaks neither of the apologue, eclogue, or epic, nor even of comedy; but in a cursory manner, and as relative to tragedy, which he has chosen for the object of his rules and directions. Having thoroughly examined his subject, he found that one kind of writing nearly included all the others: That, probably, alone took in the whole poetical universe, and all the laws by which it is governed; and that consequently by treating that object well, though in one kind only, he should be able to explain all the rest; especially if this kind was of a nature to contain



contain them all, and this he found in tragedy. This, by having the heroic of the *epopoicā*, and the dramatic of comedy, by being in verse like all other poems, by drawing its characters after nature, and by making use of a style suitable to those characters, possesses every thing that is properly the object of poetry, and consequently is in itself sufficient to convey all the rules relating to it.

As to the disposition of this work, Horace would not divide it into chapters, that he might avoid that magisterial and dogmatical air which is so irksome to most pupils. Yet, had he treated a subject of this kind without order or method, he would have been the author of a chaos rather than of a work of art, and have confused the ideas of the reader instead of enlightening them. He has certainly then observed a method in this treatise; but it must be sought for with some degree of care and attention. The reader will find this clearly exposed in the table at the end of this volume, where the several rules of the art, and those which more particularly relate to the conduct of the artist, will be found in order one after another.

Daniel Heinſius pretends that there are many passages wrongly placed in this work. But supposing this to be true, it is of so little consequence in itself, that were we even sure of it, which we are not, and that, instead of attributing it to the ignorance or incapacity of the copists, we should

should even grant it to be done by Horace himself; it would in no wise impeach either the good taste or sound judgment of that poet. So that we may take which side of the question we please, without running any risk.

## A SKETCH OF

### Vida's Art of Poetry.

**M**ARK Jeronimo Vida was born at Cremona, a city of Italy, in the year 1507. He was bishop of Alba, and died in 1566. He flourished in the glorious age of Leo X, who possessed that taste for letters which is hereditary to the house of Medicis. It was at the solicitation of this pontiff, and his successor Clement VII, that he undertook to write an Art of Poetry.

He is the author likewise of some hymns, a poem on the Passion, another on silk-worms, and another on the game of chess.

His writings discover an easy wit, a gaiety of imagination, and a light and unconstrained elocution; but then there is so much of the coloring and style of Virgil in them, that they have more the appearance of copies than originals.

His Art of Poetry is very pleasing in the versification, but seems rather intended for young beginners than the more experienced master. He takes this pupil of the muses from his cradle,  
forms

forms his ear, furnishes him with models, and then leaves him to the exertion of his own genius. Horace has taken a much better method; he ascends to the very principles, and places himself on so elevated an height, that he can give laws even to the greatest artists; whereas Vida only gives us the practical part of the art. Nevertheless, this latter has many excellent precepts and examples. What he says concerning poetical elocution, is delivered with a degree of perspicuity and demonstration hardly to be found elsewhere; and we flatter ourselves, that our young readers, especially, will be pleased with us for having brought them acquainted with this elegant versifier.

He speaks in the style of heroic poetry. He sets out with an invocation of the muses, and therefore has a right to adopt their language, and render his style as poetical as possible. (a)

(b) Give me, ye sacred muses, to impart,  
The hidden secrets of your tuneful art;  
Give me your awful mysteries to sing,  
Unlock and open wide your sacred spring,  
While

Ex Lib. I.

(a) Sit fas vestra mihi vulgate arcana per orbem,

Pierides, penitusque sacros recludere fontes,

(b) This translation is Mr. Pitt's, who translated Virgil.

While from his infancy the bard I lead,  
 And seat him on your mountain's lofty head;  
 Direct his course, and point him out the road,  
 To sing, in *Epic* strains, an hero or a god.

What youth, whose generous bosom pants for  
 praise,

Will dare, with me, to beat those arduous ways?  
 O'er high Parnassus' painful steep to go,  
 And leave the grov'ling multitude below;  
 Where the glad muses sing, and form the choir,  
 While bright Apollo strikes the silver lyre?

Approach then first, great FRANCIS, nor refuse  
 To pay due honors to the sacred muse;

While *Gallia* waits for thy auspicious reign,  
 Till age completes the monarch in the man;

Mean time the muse may bring some small relief,  
 To charm thy anguish and suspend thy grief,

While guilty Fortune's stern decrees detain  
 Thee, and thy brother, in the realms of Spain.

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Dum vatem egregium teneris educere ab annis,

Heroum qui facta canat, laude, & Deorum,

Mente agito, restitue in vertice sistere montis.

Ecquis erit juvenum segni qui plebe relicta

Sub pedibus, pulchræ laudis succensus amore,

Ausit inaccessæ tecum se credere rupi,

Lætæ ubi Pierides, cithara dum pulcher Apollo

Personat, indulgent choreis, & carmina dicunt?

Primus ades, FRANCISCE, sacras ne despicè Musas,

Regia progenies, cui regom debita sceptrum

Gallorum, cum firma annis accesserit ætas.

Hæc tibi parva ferunt jam nunc solatia dulces,

Dum procul à patria raptum, amplexuque tuorum,

Ah dolor! Hispanis fors impia detinet oris



Far, far transported from your native place,  
 Your country's, father's, and your friend's embrace!  
 Such are the terms the cruel fates impose  
 On your great father, struggling with his woes;  
 But yet, brave youth, from grief, from tears abstain,  
 Fate may relent, and Heaven grow mild again;  
 At last, perhaps, the glorious day may come,  
 The day that brings our royal exile home;  
 When, to thy native realms in peace restored,  
 The ravish'd crowds shall hail their passing lord;  
 When each transported city shall rejoice;  
 And nations bless thee with a public voice,  
 To the throng'd fanes the matrons shall repair,  
 Absolve their vows, and breathe their souls in pray'r.  
 'Till then, let ev'ry muse engage thy love,  
 With me at large o'er high Parnassus rove,  
 Range ev'ry power, and sport in every grove.

This is the true poetic strain. The bard sets out with invoking the muses: He declares, with a boldness more than human, the subject he has undertaken; he addresses his discourse to Francis I, then prisoner in Spain, in the room of his father, after the famous overthrow at Pavia; this

---

Hentico cum fratre, Patris sic fata tulerunt  
 Magnanimi dum fortuna luctatus iniqua  
 Parce tamen, puer, ô, lacrymis. Fata aspera, forsan  
 Mitescent, aderitque dies lætissima tandem  
 Post triste exilium, patriis cum redditis oris  
 Lætitiâ ingentem populorum, omnesque per urbes  
 Accipies plausus, & lætas undique voces,  
 Votaque pro reditu persolvent debita matres.  
 Interea te Pierides comitentur. In altos  
 Jam te Parnassi mecum aude atollere lucos.

is his pupil, and the pupil of the muses, who are now going to give him their lessons. (a).

## II.

Be sure (whatever you propose to write)  
Let the chief motive be your own delight,  
And well weigh'd choice ;—a task injoin'd refuse,  
Unless a monarch should command your muse.  
(If we may hope those golden times to see,  
When bards become the care of majesty.)  
Free and spontaneous the smooth numbers glide,  
Where choice determines, and our wills preside ;  
But at command we toil with fruitless pain,  
And drag th' involuntary load in vain.

Nor at its birth indulging warm desire,  
On the first glimmering of the sacred fire,  
Dare to a lofty work at once aspire,  
Defer the mighty task ; and weigh your pow'r,  
And ev'ry part in ev'ry view explore ;  
And let the theme on different prospects roll,  
Deep in your thoughts, and grow into the soul.

---

(a) Atque ideo quodcumque audes, quodcumque paratus  
Aggrederis, tibi sit placitum, atque ariserit ultro  
Ante animo. Nec jussa teneas, nisi sortè coactus  
Magnorum imperio regum, si quis tamen usquam est,  
Primores inter nostros qui talia curet.  
Omnia sponte sua, quæ nos elegimus ipsi,  
Proveniunt, durò atsequimur vix jussa labore.

Sed neque cum primùm tibi mentem inopina cupido,  
Atque repens calor attigerit, subito aggrediendum est  
Magnum opus. Adde moram, tecumque impensius antè  
Consule, quidquid id est, partesque expende per omnes  
Mente diu versans, donec nova cura senescat.

These precepts are so clear that they stand in no need of explanation. (a)

## III.

At first, without the least restraint, compose,  
And mould the future poem into prose;  
A full and proper series to maintain,  
And draw the just connection in a chain;  
By stated bounds your progress to controul,  
To join the parts, and regulate the whole.

This was always the practice of Despreaux and Racine. The ninth satire of the first of these authors, has been lately published in prose, such as he sketched it out himself. And every one knows, that, when the latter had written his tragedy in prose, he used to say, *Now I've finished my tragedy*. If one might venture to quote Chapelain at the same time with these two excellent poets, we should find his method to be the same. But as his work was of a very great length, when he began to adjust the rhymes to it, the fire which animated him in the prose, became so totally extinguished, that there was not the least spark remaining. He ought therefore, like Despreaux and Racine, to have versified, while his imagination was yet warm, for this reason, that

---

(a) Quin etiam prius effigiem formare solutis,  
Totiusque operis simulacrum fingere verbis  
Proderit, atque omneis ex ordinenectere partes.  
Et seriem rerum, & certos tibi ponere fines,  
Per quos tuta regens vestigia tendere pergas.

the genius itself contributes a great deal to the elocution, the poetic transport being no other than the invention, which discharges itself with fire and impetuosity by the means of expression.

After having spoken of the care that should be taken of a poet in his infancy, to prevent his ear being corrupted by bad sounds, the author introduces his child into the choir of the muses. What he says on this occasion is very elegant and pleasing: (a)

## IV.

Now to the muses stream the pupil bring,  
To drink large draughts from the *Pierian* spring;  
And from his birth the sacred bard adore,  
Nurs'd by the nine, on *Mincio's* flow'ry shore:  
And ask the Gods his numbers to inspire,  
With like invention, majesty, and fire.  
He reads *Ascanius'* deeds with equal flame,  
And longs with him to run at nobler game;  
Reads of the valiant youths of ages gone,  
Which, with too swift and too severe a doom,  
The fate of war had hurried to the tomb.

R 3

His

---

(a) Jamque igitur mea cura prae penetralia vaturn  
Ingrediat, & Aonia se proluat unda;  
Jamque sacrum teneris vaturn venerat ab annis,  
Quem Musae Mincis herbosis aluere sub antris;  
Atque olim similem possent sibi numina versum,  
Admirant artem, admirant praecula scripta;  
Nec mora jam favet Ascanio, tactusque dolore  
Impubes legit aequales, quos impius hausit  
Ante diem Mavors, & acerbo funere misit.



His eyes for *Pallas* and for *Lausus* flow,  
 And longs to learn the story of their woe;  
 But when *Euryalus*, in all his charms,  
 Is snatch'd by fate from his dear mother's arms,  
 And, as he rolls in death, the purple flood  
 Streams out, and stains his snowy limbs with blood;  
 His soul the pangs of gen'rous sorrow pierce,  
 And a new tear steals out at ev'ry verse.

The author would not have his pupil confine himself to Virgil, but read Homer likewise, and compare the two poets together; when he will find, says he, that true purity of style is only to be met with in the works of Virgil, and the writers of his time, the others being every-where full of faults.

In the following passage he tells us what kind of a master should be chosen for his pupil: (a).

## V.

Mean time, ye parents, with attention hear,  
 And thus advis'd exert your utmost care;  
 A blameless tutor from a thousand chuse,  
 One from his soul devoted to the muse;

Who,

---

Multa super Lauso, super & Pallante preëmpto  
 Mulis rogat: lacrymas inter quoque singula fundit  
 Carmina, crudeli cum raptum morte parenti  
 Ah! misera: læsit Euryalum pulchrosque per artus  
 Purpuream, letho dum volvitur, ire cruorem.

(a) Interea moniti vos hinc audite, parentes.  
 Quærendus rector de millibus, æque legendus,  
 Sicubi musarum studiis insignis, & arte,

Qui

Who, pleas'd the tender pupil to improve,  
Regards and loves him with a father's love.

There are still many excellent tutors to be met with, but as they are for the most part men of sense, and know the full value of their liberty, they cannot bring themselves to sacrifice it without some adequate consideration, that is to say, an easy fortune, and a great deal of respect: But it happens too frequently, that they meet with neither the one nor the other.

This first canto is wholly employed in giving the young poet the most prudent and salutary counsels; these indeed are interspersed through the whole of the work; but, in this passage, they appear more particular and striking, by being delivered in a clear and succinct manner, and yet with all the ornaments of the poetic style.

The second book contains some few rules relating to epic poetry; but as we have already treated so largely on this subject, we shall pass immediately to the third book which is entirely dedicated to elocution. (a)

## VI

Thee! noble youth, the tuneful nine invite,  
With one loud voice, to reach Parnassus' height;

R 4

See

Qui curas dulces, carique parentis amorem  
Induat, atque velit blandum perferre laborem,

Ex Lib. 3.

(a) Jam te Pierides summa ex de rupe propinquum

Voco

See how they hold aloft th' immortal crown,  
 To urge the course, and call the victor on;  
 See from the clouds each lavish goddess pours,  
 Full o'er thy head, a sudden spring of flow'rs,  
 And roses fall in odorif'rous showers;  
 Celestial scents in balmly breezes fly,  
 And shed ambrosial spirits from the sky.  
 In all you write obscurity avoid,           

We should not only write, says Quintilian, so as to be easily understood, but in such a manner that it may be impossible not to understand us. The clearness of a work should be like the brightness of the sun, and be obvious without attention, and only by opening the eyes. What he says concerning the metaphor, is very happily expressed: (a)

## VII.

See how the poet banishes, with grace,  
 A native term to give a stranger place;  
 From different images, with just success,  
 He cloaths his matter in a borrow'd dress:

The.

(a)

## IV

*Væce vocant, vindexque effertant fronte coronam*

*Victori, neque minus simulacros hostatibus addunt,*

*Jamque rosas calathis spargunt per nubila plenis*

*Desuper, & florum placido te plurima nimbo*

*Tempestas operit, gratumque effusus odorem*

*Ambrosiæ liquor aspirat, divina voluptas.*

*Verborum in primis tenebras fuge, nubilaque atra.*

(a) *Nonne vides verbis ut veris sæpe relictis*

*Accersant simulata, aliundeque nomina porro*

*Transportent, spernentque aliis ea verba, ut ipsæ*

The borrow'd dress the things themselves admire,  
 And wonder whence they drew the strange attire.  
 Now he the sight a fiery deluge names,  
 That pours along the fields a flood of flames;  
 This, if on old tradition we rely,  
 Was once the current language of the sky,  
 Which first the muses brought to these abodes,  
 Who taught to men the secrets of the gods:—

And now he begins to lay open the mysteries  
 of that true versification, which can be attained  
 by no mechanical or metrical art, but depends  
 alone on the goodness of the ear, and the deli-  
 cacy of the versifier.

Attend, young bard, and listen while I sing.  
 Lo ! I unlock the muses' sacred spring ;  
 Lo ! Phœbus calls thee to his inmost shrine,  
 Hark ! in one common voice the tuneful nine  
 Invite and court thee to the rites divine.  
 When first to man the privilege was giv'n,  
 To hold, by verse, an intercourse with Heav'n,  
 Unwilling

---

Exuviasque novas, res, insolitosque colores  
 Indutæ, sæpe externi mirentur amictus  
 Unde illi, lætæque aliena luce fruuntur,  
 Mutatoque habitu, nec jam sua nomina mallent?  
 Sæpe ideo cum bella canunt, incendia credas  
 Cernere . . . .  
 Hunc fandi morem (si vera audivimus) ipsi  
 Celicolæ exercent cœli in penetralibus altis.

(a) Huc ades. Hic penitus tibi totum Heliconæ recludam,  
 Te Musæ, puer, hinc faciles penetralibus imis  
 Admittunt, sacrisque adytis invitat Apollo.  
 Principio, quoniam magni commercia cœli  
 Numina concessere homini cui carmina curæ,



Unwilling that th' immortal art should lie  
 Cheap, and expos'd to ev'ry vulgar eye,  
 Great *Jove*, to drive away the grov'ling croud,  
 To narrow bounds confin'd the glorious road,  
 For more exalted spirits to pursue,  
 And left it open to the sacred Few.——

For many a painful task, in ev'ry part,  
 Claims all the poet's vigilance and art;  
 'Tis not enough his verses to complete,  
 In measure, numbers, and determin'd feet;  
 Or render *things* by clear *expression* bright,  
 And set each *object* in a proper light;  
 To all proportion'd terms he must dispense,  
 And make the *sound* a picture of the *sense*.——

As the things to be expressed are mournful,  
 harsh, heavy, or sprightly, the tone or cadence  
 should be rough, dull, or lively; the words long  
 or short, smooth, or loaded with consonants.

The meaning of this is, that the sounds  
 should be such as are best suited to express the  
 sense, the verse have a greater number of long  
 or short syllables, and the articulation be more  
 or less harsh or soft, according to the objects that

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*Ipse Deum genitor divinam noluit artem  
 Omnibus expositam vulgò, immeritisque patere.  
 Atque ideo, turbam quo longè arceret inertem,  
 Angustam esse viam voluit, paucisque licere.*

*Multa adèd incumbunt doctis vigilanda poetis.  
 Haud satis est illis utcumque claudere versum,  
 Et res verborum propria vi reddere claras.  
 Omnia sed numeris vocum concordibus aptant,  
 Atque sono quæcunque canunt imitantur, & apta  
 Verborum facie, & quæsito carminis ore.*

are to be represented; for, without an attention to this rule, the verse will be at best but half finished. No two verses in the same poem should have the same kind of harmony, because no one thought is to be met with twice under the same appearance in one poem. Now, if each verse must have its different harmony, this difference must arise from the thought, and the object contained in the verse. For this reason some poems are admired for their versification, which, from that very quality, are faulty in almost every part. But this is not discernible by every one: *Non quivis videt*. The mad poet, that Horace speaks of, made fine verses; but then they came from him like crude and undigested food from the stomach, forced out by a kind of convulsion, *sublimis versus ructatur*, he belched out his sublime strains, without any previous attention to the kind, matter, or object. A good verse requires a great deal of art and consideration: It must be moulded with the greatest care, *operosa carmina fingo*, as Horace says in another place. We have given the remainder of this passage of Vida in the first volume, when speaking of the pastoral.

If any one French poem has a right to enter into the study of the Belles Lettres, it is Boileau's Art of Poetry. Horace has treated only of tragedy; and Vida, properly speaking, has confined himself to the epic: But Despreaux has, within a very small compass, described all the different kinds by themselves, and laid down the  
general

general rules that belong to them all in common. And, once for all, let us assure the young student, that he ought not only to read this author with attention, but even learn him by heart, as the code, rule, and model of good taste.

I cannot conclude this article without taking notice, that we have three poems in the English tongue which are of the same nature with the foregoing, and each of them a master-piece in its kind; the essay on translated Verse, the essay on the Art of Poetry, and the essay upon Criticism.

But this is not all; every one who has read this is not ignorant, that Horace speaks of, made his verses, and then they came from him like crickets, and he looked too from the floor, forced by a kind of convulsion, with his limbs, he dashed out his trifles.

**The end of the third volume.** kind, matter, or object. A good verse requires a great deal of art and consideration: It must be moulded with the greatest care, and every word must be as Horace says in another place. We

have given the remainder of this passage of Virgil in the first volume, when speaking of the pastoral.

If any one French poem has a right to enter into the body of the Boileau Letters, it is Boileau's Art of Poetry. Horace has treated only of tragedy; and Virgil, properly speaking, has confined himself to the epic; But Despreaux has, within a very small compass, described all the different kinds of composition, and laid down the

General